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Hawker, George.
An Englishwoman's twenty-
five years in tropical



Gives affectionately
Gwen Lewis

AN ENGLISHWOMAN'S TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN TROPICAL AFRICA:

BEING THE BIOGRAPHY OF GWEN
ELEN LEWIS, MISSIONARY TO THE
CAMEROONS AND THE CONGO

BY

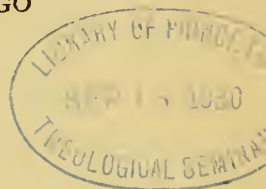
GEORGE HAWKER

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AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF GEORGE GRENFELL"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAP

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO



To

WILLIAM COULSON PARKINSON,

WHO HAS SERVED THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY
ON COMMITTEE FOR TWENTY-TWO YEARS, WHO WAS
SUPERINTENDENT OF CAMDEN ROAD CHURCH SUNDAY
SCHOOL WHEN GWEN ELEN THOMAS WAS A TEACHER,
WHO BECAME AND REMAINED HER TRUSTED FRIEND,
WHOM THE AUTHOR ALSO GLADLY CLAIMS AS FRIEND,

THIS BOOK IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE

IN July, 1910, I was requested by the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society to write the life of Mrs. Thomas Lewis of the Congo. I had shortly before arranged with Mr. Lewis to undertake the work independently; but it accorded well with his feelings and my own that it should be done under the direction of the Society which Mrs. Lewis had served for five-and-twenty years. Unfortunately the final decision was not arrived at until Mr. Lewis was on the point of returning to Africa, having already sent forward his wife's journals and papers. Consequently, in executing my task, I have missed the great advantage of consultation with him. Chapters III., IV., V., and VI. only have received his revision.

When I asked him about materials, he replied: "If you can get hold of the Hartland letters, you will have almost all you need. Gwen wrote to one or other member of the family by every mail during all her missionary life, and told them everything about her work which was worth the telling."

The Misses Lily and Alice Hartland were kind enough to place "the Hartland Letters" in my hands. The series was not complete, some letters

having been destroyed, and a few lost. But the remainder constituted a great mass of most valuable material, and this book is largely based upon it. On September 12th I received from Kim-pese a small trunk filled with Mrs. Lewis's journals and papers; and meanwhile important parcels of letters were entrusted to me by the Misses Percival, Mrs. John Jenkyn Brown, and Miss Taylor. I am also specially indebted to Mrs. Percival, the Misses Hartland, and Mrs. W. C. Parkinson, for personal recollections, and for many suggestions and corrections.

The Rev. C. E. Wilson, B.A., General Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, has given me the freedom of the Mission House for the consultation of books and papers; and the Rev. Lawson Forfeitt has helped me in many ways, especially in arranging the illustrations, and in reading the proofs.

To these, and other friends whose names are mentioned in the text, I acknowledge my obligations with warmest thanks.

In the numerous passages selected from Mrs. Lewis's letters, the reader will observe that the name of the correspondent is sometimes given. When no name appears it must be understood that the citation is from "the Hartland Letters."

As my task neared completion I realised that I had been guilty of one grave omission. During more than twenty years of her missionary life Mrs. Lewis was in frequent communication with Mr. Baynes, her official director, whom she regarded also as a most dear and honoured friend. Yet so far as I remember, there occurs in this

book but one incidental and oblique reference to Mr. Baynes's esteem for her. Observing this I wrote to him, expressing regret for my default, and begging him to send me a few lines of appreciation of his friend. With prompt kindness he wrote the following letter, which contains what I wanted, with some embarrassing additions. My respect for him prevents me from cutting up what he has been good enough to write; and if I incur reproach for printing appreciation of myself, I must bear it meekly for his sake.

“MY DEAR MR. HAWKER,—I am indeed most thankful to learn that you have undertaken to write a Memorial of the life and labours of my intimate and much-valued friend Mrs. Thomas Lewis, who gave herself with such whole-hearted consecration to the uplifting and enlightenment of the native peoples of the vast Congo Region of Central Africa, and whose name and labours will live for long years to come in the hearts and memories of those on whose behalf she toiled so lovingly and so cheerfully, and bravely endured such hardships and privations.

“I cannot help saying I know of no one who can tell the story of her consecrated life and labours so sympathetically as yourself, her beloved Pastor and her valued friend and adviser. Her name will ever be associated with your Church at Camden Road, from which have gone forth so many heroic missionaries and martyrs whose one desire it was to bear to the benighted peoples of Central Africa ‘The Light of Life,’ counting it highest privilege to tell out the Story of His Love,

Who though He was rich for our sakes became poor."

"For many years I had the joy of intimate friendship with Mrs. Lewis, and a more devoted, consecrated missionary I have never met. It is a great satisfaction to me that you have undertaken to write the story of her life and labours. and I trust that as the result many may be led to follow in her footsteps, who shall realise in doing so a joy akin to that which inspired her to the end, and described in her own words :—

"‘No toil so sweet, no joy so deep as following in His footsteps who gave Himself for us.’

"‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.’

"With sincere regard,

"Yours as ever,

"ALFRED H. BAYNES.’

May the good wish of one who has been a great helper of the cause of Foreign Missions be graciously fulfilled.

GEORGE HAWKER.

ANSON ROAD, N.

1911.

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**WEST CENTRAL AFRICA showing KAMERUN (CAMEROONS) and
THE LOWER and MIDDLE CONGO**



Baptist Missionary Society's Stations thus S. Salvador

Bartholomew, Edin'

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

G WEN ELEN THOMAS was born in London, and resided in the metropolis until the call of Africa drew her across the sea. She never lived in Wales, save during brief holiday visits, yet the Principality had its rights in her character and career, and a cherished place in her natural affection. Her father was a Welshman, and her husband was a Welshman. All her life long the beauty of the western hills glimmered through the dear home talk; she was passing happy in her occasional holiday sojourns among them; and often, when spent by labour in the torrid heat of Africa, longed for wings which might bear her away to some bracing mountain height in Wales.

Her father, George Thomas, was born at Maentwrog, to fair-seeming prospects; but his sky was soon overclouded by dire bereavement, and his life was much acquainted with adversity and disappointment. His father, Griffith Thomas of Maentwrog, early held a good position as "Crown Agent for the Woods and Forests of North Wales," and married a woman whom he loved with intense devotion. Several children were born of the mar-

riage, but at the birth of the youngest the mother died. Two years later her husband was laid beside her in the grave. It was commonly affirmed that the death of his wife shattered him, and that he died of a broken heart.

The heads of this plaintive little story are inscribed, with customary brevity, upon a tombstone in the graveyard of the church at Maentwrog, and read as follows:—

“To the memory of Jane, wife of Griffith Thomas of Maentwrog, Gent. She departed this life on the 21st day of September, 1811, aged 37 years. Also of the above-named Griffith Thomas, died on the 10th day of September, 1813, aged 34 years.”

The young orphaned children were taken charge of by relatives, and George was brought up by his grandmother.

At the age of eighteen, or thereabouts, he came to London to seek his fortune, and obtained a position in Finchams' Tea Warehouse at Charing Cross. Some years later he met a young lady, Anne Clarke, at an evening party and resolved, precipitately, that if he ever married, she should be his wife. His affection was subjected to the test of time. Three years elapsed before he secured an engagement, and four more ere he carried off his bride.

Anne Clarke was the daughter of George Rix Clarke, a Suffolk man, who wrote a history of Ipswich, which is still esteemed by antiquarians and topographers. In middle life he married a Scottish girl of seventeen, and Anne, their first child, was born at her mother's home in Edin-

burgh. The china bowl used at her christening is a treasured possession of the family.

Four children were born to George and Anne Thomas, of whom Gwen Elen was the third. At the date of her birth, January 28, 1853, her parents were residing at Albion Grove, Barnsbury, in comfortable circumstances. They had previously become associated with the Baptist Church worshipping at Providence Hall (now Cross Street), Islington, under the pastorate of the Rev. John Jenkyn Brown, who was subsequently well known to the Nonconformist world as "John Jenkyn Brown of Birmingham," and who in 1882 was President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Mrs. Thomas was received into the fellowship of the Church at Islington. Her husband, though a man of pronounced evangelical conviction, was restrained by invincible compunction from ever assuming the responsibility of Church membership. None the less, a warm friendship subsisted between him and his minister, which was maintained through all the changes of following life. When he died, his daughter, Gwen Elen, looked to Mr. Brown with filial affection which was warmly answered, and it is significant that upon the occasion of her marriage, he came from Birmingham to London to fulfil the paternal office of giving the bride away.

While Gwen Elen was still in early childhood the family fortunes sustained a severe reverse. Her father, who was in business as a Scotch agent, was the victim of a fraudulent transaction, and the loss entailed was so heavy that his business was

ruined. There followed years of struggle and vicissitude. During part of this period the family resided at Fulham, but before Gwen had emerged from childhood, they returned to the north of London and became connected with the Baptist Church at Camden Road.

One suggestive glimpse of her child-life comes down to us. Gwen and her younger brother Herbert, who were great chums, used to sit together, under the dining-room table, reading stories of Moffat and Livingstone. Years afterwards, when they were both still quite young, and the missionary interest at Camden Road Church had become acute, Herbert said one day to his sister, touched surely by the spirit of prophecy: "Gwen, you had better marry one of these missionaries, and I will come out and be your lay-helper." The forecast was only realised in part. Gwen did marry a missionary, but before that came to pass, at the early age of nineteen, Herbert died.

In these days the Church at Camden Road was a strong and flourishing community, and by way of becoming yet wealthier and more influential. The sanctuary was erected in 1854 by the Metropolitan Chapel Building Association, and at first stood in the fields. But the tide of building soon swept beyond it, and the surrounding district became the kind of suburb in which a Nonconformist Church enjoys conditions favourable to success. In 1857 the congregation invited the Rev. Francis Tucker, B.A., of Union Chapel, Manchester, to become its minister. He accepted the invitation, formed a Church, and commenced a period of service, honourably and successfully maintained for twenty-

seven years. Mr. Tucker was a man of winning personality and sympathetic manners. As a preacher he possessed commanding advantages; his musical voice was managed with consummate skill; he was master of refined, poetic diction, was gifted with imagination, and swayed withal by fervent evangelical conviction. Moreover, having held for a short period a missionary pastorate in Calcutta, his interest in the foreign work of the Church was enlightened and intense.

As a child Gwen Thomas passed under the influence of this estimable man, an influence which waxed but never waned until the day of his death. It is touching to recall that upon one occasion when she was recovering from a severe attack of fever at the Cameroons, and tormented by insomnia, her restless mind was haunted by the thought that if only Mr. Tucker could come and read to her she would be hushed to sleep.

While yet a girl her heart was given to Christ, in surrender which knew no recall, and at the age of eighteen she was baptized by her beloved minister and welcomed into the fellowship of the Church. It was at this time, or perhaps a little earlier, that she became a teacher in the Sunday School, which she had attended as a scholar for several years. Owing to circumstances, her secular schooling had been somewhat irregular, but she was fortunate in its finishing stage. It was the day of "Private Schools for Young Ladies," now almost obsolete, and one of the best establishments of this order was conducted in Hilldrop Road by the Misses Hewitt. The school was distant from Camden Road Church less than

a hundred yards, the principals were members of the Church, and were women of high character and adequate attainments. Their school was held in great repute in the district, and their influence was a social factor of happy moment. That the Misses Hewitt were able to command the esteem and affection of their pupils is pleasantly evidenced by the fact that, though the school has been discontinued for years, "The Hilldrop Old Girls' Club" still exists, and it will interest readers of this book to be informed that the last annual issue of *The Hilldrop Magazine*, the organ of the club, contained an "In Memoriam" article on Gwen Elen Lewis. To the pages of this magazine she was an occasional contributor.

At the age of nearly sixteen she entered the Hilldrop school, and for about a year enjoyed advantages which greatly improved her equipment for the battle of life. Like many of her fellow pupils, she became warmly attached to her teachers, and the ensuing friendship was only broken by her death. I am happily indebted to Miss Amy Hewitt for the following paragraphs. Confessedly unable to supply incidents, Miss Hewitt has conveyed impressions which are as vivid as they are helpful:—

"It is many years since she was a school girl, and the lapse of time has naturally robbed my memory of all but the most startling individual happenings in our professional experience. Moreover, Mrs. Lewis was not the sort of girl to make dramatic school history. High souled, law abiding, and very conscientious, loving knowledge for its

own sake, and eager to make the most of her advantages, she was an ideal scholar.

“Coming into an atmosphere thoroughly congenial to her temperament, she settled happily at once, and though she has since said that the influence of the few months spent as a daily pupil at Hildrop Road was amongst the most permanently formative of her life, there was nothing at the time to distinguish her from a set of like-minded young girls who were her companions, and some of whom became her life-long friends.

“Though I have no definite facts to communicate, my impressions of her personality and character remain undimmed. I remember that as Gwen Elen Thomas she entered our school on October 12, 1868, a short, plump, fair, blue-eyed girl of sixteen, whose slight guttural accent, even without the additional hint of her Welsh name, would have suggested her nationality. Her bearing was self-contained but alert. She was *there*—her individuality well developed; and she was *there*, with all her faculties alive to receive and to give out influence. That was the first superficial impression.

“Later on we became familiar with, and learned to love, the serious, intent face, the steady penetrating glance, and the quick sense of humour, which on the slightest provocation lighted up her countenance with fun, and moved her to hearty laughter. She was keenly interested in her studies and brought to bear on them strong intelligence and powers unusually mature for her age.

“Monsieur de Lamartinière was at that time our

French master, and Gwen Elen greatly delighted in his lessons. She had been thoroughly well grounded in the language, and so was prepared to profit by advanced lessons; and she made very rapid progress.

“Gifted and eager, she never seemed to find any subject dull or distasteful, but, as was natural to one of her sympathetic and deeply religious character, History, Literature, and Scripture particularly, attracted her and brought her original mind into play.

“The splendid endowments of heart and head which made her so good a pupil were given unstintedly to her missionary work, and it was with great delight that we heard from time to time of her wonderful success in Africa.”

One of her fellow scholars at the Hilldrop School was Emily Smith, daughter of Mr. Jonas Smith, a deacon of Camden Road Church, and between these two girls there grew up a warm and helpful friendship. They prepared their lessons together, and entered with girlish ardour into each other's interests. In course of time Gwen Thomas became a frequent visitor at her friend's home. And that it was a genial, hospitable home, there are not a few who could bear grateful witness. When her own mother died, the Smiths loved her the more for her sorrow, and for the filial devotion she had displayed; and how the friendship was maintained, and how Annie Smith a younger daughter followed her into the mission-field, will appear as this story proceeds.

And now something must be said of a man whose influence upon the life of Miss Thomas was not less than that of her minister, though he was her senior by a few months only. Thomas J. Comber was a member of the Baptist Church at Denmark Place, Camberwell, of which Dr. Charles Stanford, of gracious memory, was the gifted honoured minister. The love of Christ and the passionate desire to be a missionary of the Cross came to Comber in his early youth. While yet a lad, he became a Sunday-school teacher at Denmark Place, and was barely nineteen when he entered Regent's Park College to gain equipment for his ordained career.

It is more than a convenient Sabbath day's journey from Regent's Park to Denmark Place, and so it fell out that in his student days Comber became a frequent worshipper at Camden Road. He loved children, was keen for any kind of Christian service, and soon found an opening in the Sunday morning infant class. It occurs to me to remark, in passing, that he is the only theological student of my remembrance who ever found himself effectually called to this modest sphere of labour. And I am tempted to add that if there be aught of disparagement in this reflection, it is not of the sphere.

His increasing interest in Camden Road Sunday School, and his zeal for the spiritual welfare of the scholars, led him to request permission to conduct a week-evening children's service. Camden Road Church has always been reasonably conservative, and the proposed innovation was not acceded to without demur. But Comber,

thus early, was not a man to be deterred from treading any path which seemed to him the path of duty, because certain excellent people might be in doubt of its expediency. Hesitating, dubious folk are apt to draw aside when one appears who will not be denied, and Comber had his way. The service was instituted, and spiritual forces generated by its means are working to-day.

The early hour of the children's meeting made it difficult for young men to attend, and Comber's helpers were at first exclusively drawn from the teachers on the girls' side of the school; and now and then he was twitted by the remark that all his lieutenants were girls. But he was too much in earnest to be perturbed by a gentle gibe, and in the course of a few years the pleasantries would seem a feeble thing, in relation to a man who had proved himself, under heroic conditions, to be a resolute, virile, and resourceful leader of men.

Meanwhile if his lieutenants were girls they were of the right mettle, believed in him implicitly, admired him profoundly, backed him bravely in his Christian endeavours, and were destined to remain his warm friends as long as he lived. Gwen Elen Thomas was one of them, and among others associated with her in this service were Miss Emily Smith, Miss Rosa Nodes, who played the harmonium, and Miss Emily Pewtress, daughter of Mr. Stephen Pewtress, deacon and secretary of the Church.

Comber believed profoundly in child conversion. He set himself to bring about early and intelligent decision for Christ, and his purpose was honoured of God. There were many such decisions, and in

course of time there was a goodly list of children who simply but credibly affirmed their personal faith in Christ. These Comber wisely accounted babes in Christ, who needed nursing, and as many of them were girls, some, fourteen or fifteen years of age, he concluded that their own teachers were fitter for the business than himself. So he called his four lieutenants together and informed them that these young converts must be divided up into classes, of which they must take charge. In the course of his instructions concerning procedure, he said that each little meeting must be commenced with prayer. They were dismayed. No one of them had ever engaged in prayer with a human audience; the thing could not be done. Practical and gently autocratic, he bade them meet together and make their first attempts among themselves. They were obedient, and the work went on according to the leader's plans.

Though Comber did very well with his young women helpers, it was all joy to him when one of the teachers from the other side of the school joined him, and shared his labours in the conduct of the services. Of John Hartland, now entering the story of Miss Thomas's life, much will be written in the next chapter. Suffice it to say at this point that he stood beside Comber in his work among the children at Camden Road, conducted it after Comber had sailed for the Cameroons, joined him later on the Congo, and died in his arms, having won from him a love as deep and tender as that he gave him.

Comber now had a man lieutenant, and had

need of him. For though the majority of his weekly audience may have been girls, there were always boys present, and of the importance of his work among the boys the following letter from Mr. S. Leslie Pewtress yields convincing and beautiful evidence :—

“My remembrances of these services for children conducted by Mr. Comber at Camden Road are very hallowed ones. I was quite a lad, but can distinctly recollect how the talk in our home ran that he was a very brave young student to attempt them, and very persevering to get permission to hold them, in spite of much opposition and cold water.

“There was no Band of Hope then. For children there were occasional magic lanterns, annual Sunday-school meetings, and a composition and an elocution class for young fellows—also a singing class. But Mr. Comber’s meetings were so different from all these. I felt as I entered the room that there was a holy purpose in it all. Coming, as Mr. Comber did, from outside, having no relatives or friends in the place, he seemed to me a direct messenger from God. I had a strange awe of him that he dared speak as he did, and yet I rejoiced that he could. I wish I could recall the hymns we sang. They seemed very special at the time I know.

“Mr. Comber made a practice of standing at the door and saying goodbye to us as we went out. I tried to avoid him if I could, and being one of the bigger lads he let me pass many times. One night, however, he took my hand somewhat diffidently, and as he said good-night, added, ‘Do



CAMDEN ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH, LONDON.

(Photo: F. Thurston, F.R.P.S., Luton.)

you love the Lord Jesus?' I was quite dumb with emotion. I can feel the appealing look with which I lifted my eyes to his face and met his kindly loving eyes, even now. Then I broke away and hurried home to my bedside, where, on my knees, the tears streaming down my cheeks, and in utter silence, my heart poured itself out to God in longing desire to be a better boy. It was my first conversion, the first yielding of heart and will to God I ever made.

"Mr. Comber never knew. He said no word to me at later meetings. What he thought of my rudeness and coldness I do not know. I fear I hurt him a little, but he never resented it. His later work, especially as a missionary, was always shaming me to myself, while he has always been to me the ideal Christian young man, and hero. But when I look at his photograph it is always to the children's services that my thoughts are carried back."

The writer of this letter, who, to my personal knowledge, has been for five-and-twenty years a cultured, devoted, and successful Christian worker among children and young people, would probably be in agreement with one of Comber's four helpers, already named, who recently told me that he was unquestionably one of the strongest personal, spiritual forces she had ever encountered in a lifetime of Christian service.

That this man exercised a formative and dominant influence upon the life of Miss Thomas, during the years of their association, is a statement that needs no other proof than that afforded by the facts, that she began her missionary career

in his tracks upon the Cameroons ; spent three-and-twenty years of her life in the great Congo field, which he and Grenfell opened up for the Baptist Mission ; and, as long as she lived, continued to speak of him with reverent affection.

In certain regards Comber and Miss Thomas were greatly unlike in temperament, yet had they much in common of gravest moment. The love of Christ was the grand passion of both their lives. They were both endowed with indomitable will and the consequent capacity for sustained industry. They both loved and understood children, possessed the saving grace of humour, and, devoutness notwithstanding, took innocent and wholesome delight in fun.

I met Comber several times during his last furlough, but my visual remembrances of him are restricted to two living pictures, typical and contrasting, which I will endeavour to call up before the mind of the reader. A children's party is in course at the house of Mr. Jonas Smith. The company is gathered in the drawing-room, and consists of twenty or thirty children of varying ages, with a sprinkling of benevolent elders. Comber is at the piano, singing, to his own accompaniment, a humorous song. The accompaniment is mimetic as well as musical. Every feature of his mobile face, roguishly turned to his audience, and every muscle of his lissom body, seem to move in concert with the fun. When it is over and he is about to leave the instrument, he is stormed by overwhelming numbers, held to his place, and coaxed and coerced into singing again.

Three months later I find myself sitting in the

area of Exeter Hall. This time it is not a children's party which is in course, but the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society. The Hall is crowded in every part, and in the middle of the platform stands a young man, with a keen, clean-shaven, boyish-looking face. The great hushed throng is mastered by the speaker, who is none other than the singer of the laughing song. He does the storming this time, and he has his way with the hearts of his audience. There have been heavy losses on the Congo. Counsels of retreat have been urged. What has Thomas Comber to say about it? He has the right to speak. He is a lonely man. His young bride has lain for years in a Congo grave, and the Congo grave of his brother, Dr. Sidney Comber, is newly made. Yes, surely he has the right to speak! What has he to say? Even now after four-and-twenty years I can see the flame of passion kindling in his face as he pleads that he and his brethren may be spared the shame, and the cause of Christ the wrong, which would be involved in retreat. Would they bid Grenfell back, whose exploits he praises and whose gallant words he quotes? It is unthinkable. That speech made history. Counsels of retreat died into silence. "Forward," not "Backward," became the order of the day.

Such are my two distinct remembrances of the man, whom the children at Camden Road loved as a teacher, admired as a hero, and romped with as a playmate; whom the Congo natives, when they came to know him, regarded as a miracle of love and power; and whom his comrades followed as

a captain whose belt has been buckled by the fingers of Almighty God.

During the years of Comber's memorable service at Camden Road, Miss Thomas lived at home with her parents. Her mother was a woman of gentle, retiring disposition, who permitted herself to be absorbed by domestic interests, and was remarkable for an inexhaustible patience, which her daughter Gwen inherited, to the great advantage of her own soul, her comrades, and her work. Mr. Thomas was a man of keen intellect and independent outlook, who was wont to talk freely with his children about books and men and movements of the day, and whose conversation was an educative influence of major importance.

On Christmas Eve, 1876, Miss Thomas sustained one of the great bereavements of her life, in the passing away of her mother, long an invalid, to whom her filial attention had been unremitting. Three months earlier, in September of the same year, she, with many others, had said "goodbye" to Thomas Comber, who sailed for the Cameroons. The Children's Service Valedictory Meeting at Camden Road was at once sorrowful and enthusiastic. The young folk were grieved to lose their leader, but loyal enough to be glad that he was going to the great work marked out for him by God. A testimonial address, headed "Mizpah," was presented to him by John Hartland, in the name of the children who had signed it, together with a magic lantern, for which they had subscribed; and promising faith-

ful, affectionate, and prayerful remembrance, Comber passed on his way.

Of course, he continued to correspond with his young friends, and by way of augmenting their interest in his work, suggested that they should support a mission boy. The suggestion was adopted, and a scholars' working meeting was instituted by Miss Gwen Thomas and Miss Emily Smith, to raise the necessary funds. It was a modest enterprise at the beginning. The first sale was held in a corner of the schoolroom, with goods displayed upon a single table. Later a second corner was annexed, and a second table furnished. Later still Mrs. Jonas Smith took practical interest in the undertaking, a "Ladies' Missionary Working Party" was formed, and so on, until the whole Church became involved in the business of "The Camden Road Congo Sale," which at one period ranked as a Denominational Institution.

The Annual Sale is still maintained, though in modified form, and in the course of its history has contributed to the funds of the B.M.S. some £3,000, more or less. Mrs. Lewis loved "The Congo Sale," was often occupied with its business when on furlough, had the honour of opening it more than once, when the opening had become a function, and talked of it when she lay a-dying.

Miss Alice Hartland remembers that at the early working meeting Miss Thomas used to read to the children as they sat sewing, "The Life of Robert Moffat." Naturally Robert Moffat was one of her heroes, and many years later she wrote, in a passage which I propose to quote, that

Mrs. Moffat was her ideal of what a missionary's wife should be. Happily, by the grace of God, she lived to realise her ideal, in marked degree, and to create a new one for others who may follow in her steps.

One pathetic family incident relates itself to this children's working meeting shortly after its inception. In 1868 Miss Thomas's elder sister, Eliza Jane, was married to Dr. Richard Percival, and some three years later accompanied him to St. Lucia, West Indies, where he had secured a medical appointment. His health failed, and after a short stay he was compelled to return. There were three children of the marriage, Ethel, Eva, and Beatrice, whose names will often appear in this book. But their father's health was never strong, and in 1877 he was lying ill at St. Leonards. Two of the children were staying with their Aunt Gwen, and on Saturday afternoon were taken by her to the Working Meeting. While engaged in the meeting she received a telegram bidding her bring the little ones to the bedside of their dying father. They were taken immediately, and shortly afterwards he passed away.

CHAPTER II

BETROTHAL, BEREAVEMENT, AND DESIGNATION TO THE CAMEROONS

COMBER began his missionary life at Victoria, the colony founded by Alfred Saker as the new home of the little Protestant community, driven from Fernando Po by the intolerance of the Roman Catholic authorities. Victoria was situated on the shore of Ambas Bay, and at the foot of the Cameroons Mountain, which Comber climbed one day, finding at the top the bottle left there by Captain Burton, an exploit which led to a pleasant interchange of compliments at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society in London.

Not long after his arrival Comber was left in sole charge of the station, and threw himself into the work with characteristic zeal. Grenfell, meanwhile, was working at Bethel station on the Cameroons river. Subsequently the two were thrown much together and formed a friendship which was of happiest omen for the cause of Christianity in Central Africa. Both of them turned with longing eyes to the interior, yearning for work among heathen tribes whose original

depravity had not been complicated and deepened by imported European evils. But their dreams of local extension were broken by the call to the Congo.

Stanley's historic journey "Through the Dark Continent," in the course of which he proved that the Lualaba River and the Congo were one and the same stream, and the opportune munificence of Mr. Robert Arthington of Leeds, whose inspired guess had anticipated the explorer's discovery, made a new departure in the work of the Baptist Mission at once possible and obligatory. I have told the story of this new departure at some length in "The Life of George Grenfell,"¹ and must here compass the matter in a few rapid sentences.

The Committee of the B.M.S. realised that in Comber and Grenfell they had men who were providentially raised up, endowed, equipped, and placed, for the new enterprise. On January 5, 1878, the young missionaries received the expected invitation to undertake a pioneering expedition in the Congo region. Their assent was instant and enthusiastic, and while awaiting final instructions they made a flying visit to the lower reach of the Congo, and laid some stepping-stones for future use.

Encouraged by their reconnoitring experiences, they returned, completed their preparations, sailed from Cameroons on June 28th, and early in August were in San Salvador, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Congo, making friends with the king. They felt their way a stage or two further on

¹ "The Life of George Grenfell, Congo Missionary and Explorer" (Religious Tract Society), p. 91 *et seq.*

toward Stanley Pool, but encountering obstacles, realising the imperative need of reinforcements, and being profoundly convinced of the feasibility and the obligation of the new enterprise, they went back upon their tracks, Grenfell returning to the Cameroons, and Comber coming to London to tell his story and to ask for men. He got them in the persons of Holman Bentley, Harry Crudgington, and John Hartland.

Hartland had long cherished in his heart the desire to be a missionary, but the way had never opened for him to secure the college training which seemed to be necessary, and so his desire had remained his secret, discussed only with his sister. But Comber's appeal so stirred him that he could not restrain himself longer. On returning from a meeting of the Young Men's Missionary Society, held at the Mission House, he wrote to Comber in these terms:—

“I have longed, I have prayed to go, and have often cried, ‘Here am I; send Me’; but I have never yet felt that He was sending me, and I dare not go alone. But to-night you said you wanted to take back with you to Africa one or two men at once. The preparation for mission work was always my obstacle, but if the men you need are men ready to dedicate themselves, *as they are*, and at once to the Lord's service—if the only preparation needed is the preparation of the Holy Spirit; if the wisdom needed is that wisdom promised to those who ask; if the sufficiency is not a college education, but the sufficiency which is of God—I cannot, I dare not hold back. . . . My mind is fully made up, that if you will

accept me (and you know what I am, I have no need to introduce myself to you), as a fellow-helper in the Lord's work, and if the Society will take me as one of their workers, I am ready this day to consecrate myself to the Lord."

Comber's joyous answer was: "Apply at once." The application was duly made and accepted, and on April 26, 1879, John Hartland, to his heart's desire sailed with Comber, Bentley, and Crudgington for the Congo. He was known at Camden Road, as a quiet, rather nervous, good young man, and probably none, save two or three who knew him best, supposed that he had in him the making of a capable, heroic, missionary pioneer. But he had. And in quiet station work at San Salvador, in adventurous journeys in which he shared attempts to find a practicable way to Stanley Pool, and in the heavy subsequent labour of establishing a line of communications for the traffic of the mission, and especially for the transport of the steamer *Peace*, he exhibited readiness of hand, resource of brain, and devotion of spirit, which elicited the unstinted admiration and affection of his colleagues. That he could write vividly is sufficiently proved by the following extract from a long and profoundly interesting letter wherein he tells of an experience which almost made an end of Comber's career and his own:—

"We walked into the town (Banza Makuta) and asked the people its name, but got no answer. They drew back a little, and then one man called out, "Nda bongo nkeli, vonda mindeli!" ("Fetch the guns; kill the white men!") and in

an instant they rushed away returning immediately armed with great sticks, huge pieces of stone, knives, cutlasses, and guns, and without any word of palaver, commenced dancing and leaping round us, and brandishing their weapons. Mr. Comber sat down by a house, and I was about to do the same, but our assailants yelled out, "Get up, get up," and rushed upon us. Such fiendish, blood-thirsty, cruel countenances I never saw. We got up and called to them to stop, that we would go back, but it was no good, and stones came flying towards us, and sticks and knives were brandished around us. We could see the people were determined, not only to drive us from the town, but to have our lives, so there was nothing left for us to do but to attempt flight, though it seemed hopeless. Away we started, amid stones and blows. We all got hit and bruised, but managed to reach the top of the steep hill, when a sudden report rang out behind us, above the uproar, and Mr. Comber, who was in front of me, fell. I dashed up to him and tried to assist him to rise, but he said, "It's no use, John; I'm hit, you go on."

How Comber got up again, overtook Hartland and Cam, and ran with them for many miles with a jagged ironstone bullet embedded in the muscles of his back; and how ultimately they all three reached a friendly town and were safe, is familiar history.

Possibly the reader may be wondering by this time whether, carried away by interest in John Hartland and the Congo Mission, I have forgotten Miss Thomas and my proper business. I hope

the next paragraph may afford adequate proof that this is not the case.

Early in 1882 Mrs. Seymour, who as Miss Nodes had been closely associated with John Hartland in the children's work at Camden Road, and whose husband was his friend, received from him a most interesting and momentous letter. In it he confessed that before leaving for the Congo he had conceived a strong affection for Miss Gwen Thomas, and the hope that one day he might have the happiness of securing her as his wife. Foreseeing that he might not be able to endure the Congo climate, he determined to keep his love and his hope secret, and had sailed without giving word or sign. At least he had done his best in the matter of concealment. But now that he had become acclimatised, and good prospect of life and work was before him, he was minded to put his fate to the test, and he desired Mrs. Seymour to broach the subject for him. On one condition! He conceived it possible that during his absence Miss Thomas's interest and affection might have been engaged by some other man. If Mrs. Seymour had reason to suppose that such was the case, then he would have her burn his letter, and keep his secret, as he was sure that if Miss Thomas knew she had been the innocent occasion of suffering to him, she herself would suffer, and that purposeless suffering he would have her spared. But if the way seemed clear, he desired a friend's most friendly mediation. He enclosed a letter addressed to his sister. If all went well with his indirect wooing, he desired Mrs. Seymour to hand this letter to Miss Hartland that his friends at

home might have the earliest possible intimation of his joy. But if things went awry, he would have the letter destroyed, that they might not know that with other burdens he carried the grievous addition of an unrequited love.

It was obviously the letter of a courteous, Christian gentleman, and much impressed by its extreme chivalry, Mrs. Seymour proceeded to execute her difficult commission. But finding that the negotiation was not to be precisely a matter of plain sailing, with sound, womanly wisdom she made haste to convey to her correspondent the time-honoured counsel, "Speak for yourself, John."

John spoke for himself, on such wise that obstacles were removed, hesitations overcome, and in due course he received the word of assent which his heart coveted. But he had to wait for it, with what patience he could muster, through several weary months. The following letter will say much to the discerning reader and spare me pages of laboured exposition:—

"ST. MARGARET'S," HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

"*July 5, 1882.*

"MY DEAR MRS. HARTLAND,—Thank you so much for your kind letter of this morning. I am so glad that our engagement is pleasing to you. I feel sure that it is the hand of God which has guided us both in this matter. My only regret is that dear John should have had such a weary waiting time. But I try to remember that he is in 'Our Father's' care as well as I. I do most earnestly pray that I may be a help to him in the great and noble work he has undertaken: work in which I have so long

wished to have a share, that I am almost afraid to realise that my heart's desire is about to be fulfilled. I can only leave my joy where I have so often left my desires, at the feet of Him to whom all hearts are open, all desires known. I am hoping to go home on Saturday evening to spend the Sunday. If I am early enough I will try to look in on my way. If not, I shall be at chapel on Sunday morning and stay to communion there, when I shall hope to see some of you. I would propose coming down in the afternoon, but my own dear papa is so very unwell that I don't think I could leave. With best love to you all,

“Believe me,

“Yours affectionately,

“GWEN ELEN THOMAS.”

“St. Margaret's, Hampstead Heath,” from which this letter is dated, was the residence of Mr. and Mrs. May, in whose family Miss Thomas was acting as governess, having responsible charge of their young children. Her position was a singularly happy one. She was treated as a friend, and received the utmost Christian courtesy and kindness, of which she often speaks in her letters, with expressions of warm gratitude. Mr. and Mrs. May used to spend the winter in Spain, and during their absence Miss Thomas had the care of their children at Ramsgate. Consequently her opportunities of seeing Mrs. Hartland were only occasional, but her letters were frequent and affectionate. It is manifest that Mrs. Hartland had taken the woman of her son's choice into her heart, and that Miss Thomas gladly accepted the spiritual hospitality.

She had kept John Hartland waiting a long time. A curious Nemesis ordained that she in her turn should be kept waiting. Having despatched the letter which is to abolish his anxieties and fill his heart with rapture, she naturally yearns to have the record of the rapture before her in black and white. Of course, she must wait for the mails; but the mails come and the record tarries. Shipwreck and minor mischances cause her hope to be deferred. Toward the end of September she writes plaintively to Miss Hartland: "It seems as if all this year has been taken up for me and John in waiting for letters." Meanwhile her spare time is not occupied in idle dreaming. She has taken up the study of Portuguese, and writes out her Sunday-school lessons, finding this a more fruitful means of studying the Bible than reading merely. Moreover she thinks her MSS. "may come in handy by-and-by." In October, by the irony of fate, she gets news of her sweetheart through other people's letters, and ruefully writes to Mrs. Hartland: "John seems to have written to every one by this mail except to Mrs. Seymour and to me"; and goes on to say that she will be very glad when the suspense is over and she can look forward to getting her letters every month. The November mail brought peace.

"13, WELLINGTON CRESCENT, RAMSGATE.

"November 19, 1882.

"MY DEAREST MRS. HARTLAND,—I must write just a line or two to tell you I had my letter last night. Wasn't it nice? On his birthday! And so the long waiting time is over for both of us at

last. I can hardly believe it. It is all so wonderful, the way that the Lord has led us both. Poor dear old boy! he has had a long, weary time altogether. But it is over at last, and, as he puts it, 'The joy of the present is all the sweeter for past sorrow.' I suppose you have had a letter, for he tells me he is going to write to you. In mine he says it will be nearly another year, he fears, before he is home. My letter is dated September 15th. I can't write about other things now. But I know you will rejoice with us both in our happiness. With much love to all,

"Believe me, dear Mrs. Hartland,

"Yours affectionately,

"GWEN ELEN THOMAS."

At the end of November Messrs. Grenfell and Doke were on the point of sailing for the Congo, and Miss Thomas records her regret that she was unable to see them, but cherishes the hope of meeting them in Africa. Grenfell she met, though under other conditions than those she had forecast; but Doke had passed on. As the year waned her father's illness had caused her grave concern, but before it closed he was better. She records also with pleasure that she is wearing the ring which Mrs. Hartland had procured at her son's desire.

The little spell of happy work and happy correspondence to which she had looked forward was quickly troubled. Later deep called unto deep. In January her father died, at the age of seventy-three, and her natural sorrow was rendered more acute by the fact that he had

been to her, as to his other children, a friend as well as a father, who desired and received not only their filial affection, but their understanding and sympathy in the intellectual interests of his life.

Soon afterwards came news of the death of Mr. Doke, who had studied and practised engineering, as well as theology, and had gone out to the Congo with Grenfell, specially to superintend the reconstruction of the steamer *Peace*. This sad event moved Miss Thomas deeply and touched her happy dreams with a shadow of new anxiety. Three months later the shadow suddenly blackened.

On June 19th Mr. Brock called to inform her that the Baptist Missionary Committee had received a letter from Grenfell stating that John Hartland was ailing, and that Grenfell hoped to send him home immediately, in which case he might be expected at the end of the month. At first she was naturally tempted to regard the news as good, giving promise of an early meeting with the man she loved. But reflection quickly taught her that Mr. Brock would not have been deputed by the Committee to bring her happy tidings, and she prepared herself for the disclosure of the fact, designedly withheld from her for the moment, that John Hartland's illness was very grave. For three weeks her heart was tense with anxiety, and she wrote to Mrs. Hartland frequently, sometimes day by day, pouring out her solicitude, her sympathy, the pain of her love and the comfort of her faith.

On July 4th she wrote in a letter to Mrs. Hartland: "I heard from Mr. Crudgington this

morning, telling me of the answer he had received. He seems to think it probable that our dear John will be on board the English mail, as it is so late. But I am trying not to count upon it too much." This was written in the morning. In the afternoon the following telegram was received at the Mission House :—

"Madeira, 1.55, July 4th. Received here 4.11 p.m.

"Baynes, Baptist Missionary Society, London.

"Hartland dead, dysentery. Break news gently.

"DIXON (Congo)."

In the evening Mr. Baynes broke the news to Mrs. Hartland, and his colleague, the Rev. J. B. Myers, to Miss Thomas. Mr. Myers has given me an account of the well-remembered interview. Upon receiving him Miss Thomas took her seat upon a couch. When he had communicated his heavy tidings her features became rigid, but she gave no other sign of emotion. He spoke gently, and prayed with her, "Yet she neither moved nor wept," and when he left her she remained silent and still as one in a trance.

When the mail came it was pitiful to learn that the man she had loved had been lying in his grave five weeks before the first intimation of his illness had been received at home. Here I take leave to reproduce the brief account of John Hartland's death, given in "The Life of George Grenfell" :—

"The timely arrival of Mr. Dixon at Underhill, and his willingness to take charge while Grenfell got away, made the desired journey possible. The

'run-up-country' was a figure of speech, for he was so weak that he had to be carried in a hammock.

"Prior to starting he had written cheerily of his hope of soon meeting his friend, John Hartland, who, while willing to stay, was to be constrained to take furlough in July or August. This hope was fulfilled earlier than he had forecast, but under conditions which made the fulfilment a heart-breaking disappointment.

"At Manyanga, in the middle of April, Hartland found himself so weakened by fever that he took boat and came down river to Bayneston, arriving on April 21st. Hughes, who was in charge of the station at Bayneston, overborne by the heavy nursing which Hartland's serious condition entailed, wrote to Butcher, who was at the camp on the Luvu River, beseeching him to hurry on to Bayneston. With fever upon him, Butcher started immediately, and by dint of hard walking arrived at Bayneston the next day, having previously despatched a message to Grenfell, who had left Underhill on the 27th. The message reached him on the second day of his journey, and though ill himself, he pushed on with forced marches arriving at Bayneston on May 1st. It was at once apparent to him that Hartland, whom Hughes and Butcher had 'carefully nursed through ten days of the severest form of dysentery,' was in a dangerous condition. But abatement of the worst symptoms gave hope, which again was subdued to fear.

"After further fluctuations, hope was abandoned on May 10th, and it was Grenfell's duty to

inform his friend that his day's work was done. 'I shan't easily forget,' he writes, 'his look, as he gazed at us and said, 'Well, I am not afraid to die. My trust is in Jesus. Whosoever believeth in Him hath everlasting life!' A little while later he said, 'After four years' preparation, and just as I am about to enter upon mission work proper, it seems strange for me to realise that my work is done: but He knows best.'

"On the evening of the same day Comber arrived unexpectedly, and most opportunely, for the affection of these two men for one another was intense. They had worked together in the home country, they had shared early perils, and were absolutely one in their devotion to Christ and His work in Africa. Their intercourse during the two remaining days of Hartland's life was very tender and sacred, and the letter which Comber wrote to Mrs. Hartland is one of the most beautiful and touching of all our missionary records. It reveals how the dying man's gaze was absorbed by Christ; how he turned from dear thoughts of home and marriage and happy work to the dearer thought of being with Him, and seeing Him as He is. His last words, uttered at the final moment, were: 'Christ is all in all; Christ is all in all. Let me go, my friends. Don't hold me back. Let me go, Tom. I must go. I want to go to Him. "Simply to Thy cross I cling." Let me go.' So he passed on."

To this account I am now enabled to make a touching addition. On May 10th Grenfell told Hartland that he was dying. After hearing the announcement, and having the witness in himself

that it was true, he indited four letters, severally addressed to his father, his mother, his two sisters, and Miss Thomas. The first three have been placed in my hands.

In the letter to his father Hartland explains that as the power of writing has passed from him, his friend Butcher is taking down the words at his dictation. The same notes of dignity, tenderness, and calm faith are found in every one. Assured that only good can come of it, I venture to print the tenderest of them all.

“BAYNESTON, CONGO RIVER.

“May 10, 1883.

“MY DEAR MOTHER,—You will be sorry to know when you get this letter that your missionary boy has passed away from the field of active service to rest. My views of missionary life were not that I should fall after four short years, but that I should spend my whole life in Christ’s service. But He knows best. I know you will not grieve to hear that He has delivered me from a long and painful illness, and at last taken me to Himself. But, oh! my dear mother, I am so sorry for you. Your heart will break. Oh, may He be very near to you! You have been a dear, good mother to me, and now in writing this brief farewell I feel happy that it will not be so long before we meet again, in His land, where sickness and dying are no more.

“Comfort poor, dear Gwennie; and while you live, be a mother and a friend to her.

“Farewell,

“Your affectionate son,

“JOHN.”

Mrs. Hartland was faithful to the charge of her dying son. From that time forth, as long as she lived, she was "a mother and a friend" to Miss Thomas, and from that time forth Miss Thomas called her "mother." What wonder that she wrote to Miss Hartland while her grief was new, "I feel so thankful ever to have had the love of such a brave, good, noble man? Oh, Lily, what have I lost?" With wonted kindness Mrs. May granted Miss Thomas leave of absence. Part of the resting-time was spent with Mrs. Hartland and part with her cousin in Yorkshire.

At first, in the great weariness following suspense and shock, Miss Thomas confessed more than once a yearning to follow her dear one into the great rest. But her native strength of mind, and her loyalty to God quickly conquered such weakness. Rather would she live to carry on his work.

The following extracts from letters written while her great sorrow was still fresh and keen, will give the reader some insight into the inner life of a woman who was learning in the school of pain, those deeper lessons of the faith, which may be learned by rote in other schools, but not by heart, lessons which she never forgot, which contain the last secret of her victorious life.

"August 21st. (To Mrs. Hartland.) But don't think from this that I am worrying or fretting; for I am not. God is with me, and I feel more and more as the days go by that our darling's prayers for me have been wonderfully answered, that I am helped and comforted. And is it not an honour and privilege 'to know Him and the fellowship of

His sufferings'? He has always been with me in trouble and sorrow, but never so near as in this the deepest of all. I hardly like to write thus, but I want you to know, so that you may not be anxious about me. And as to my future, I have left it with Him to do as He will with me, and I pray for grace to be faithful in whatever work He calls me to."

"August 28th. (To Miss Hartland.) To-day I have had a letter, a very precious one, from Mr. Comber. . . . I think he is feeling his loss very much, though he writes as brightly as he can. . . . Since I have been back I have read through Farrar's 'Life of Christ,' and it has helped me so much. I think these sorrows must be sent to us to make us know that 'Christ is all in all'; for gradually we come to learn that having Him we can do without all else. And yet, how we long for human love! Nor do I think it can be wrong to do so; for even Christ looked for human sympathy in His sorrow. He could not find it. And, oh, how much we have had in ours! I never so much realised before the oneness of the people of God; so many kind letters from far and near, some even from unknown friends, and yet so full of sympathy and prayer. I have thought of that verse so often:—

"His way was much rougher and darker than mine;
"Did Christ my Lord suffer, and shall I repine?"

"Same date. (To Mrs. Hartland.) I am very thankful the way seems to be opening. Of course I will go to India if it is thought best. But no one knows how dear and sacred Africa is to me. . . . My

only wish now is to live as he lived, and when my work is done (if God wills) to die as he died, for Christ and Africa. I do think of you so much, and could almost envy you at times the sweet, pure memories of his boyish days. I do feel it is an honour to have had the love (for so many years though I did not know it) of such a noble, true, good man. And I am sure you, dear mother, feel it a high privilege to have had such a son. It is a great comfort to look back, and while we sorrow, to feel there is nothing to regret. A pure, noble life, and a glorious death. I think of that text so often, 'If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I go to My Father.' Oh, how happy he must be!"

As soon as she had recovered strength after the shock of her great bereavement, Miss Thomas formed the determination to go to the mission-field alone, and with little delay made application to the Baptist Missionary Society. Her application was accepted in September. At first there was thought of sending her to India, but finally, to her great joy, it was decided that she should labour at the Cameroons, travelling thither with Miss Comber, who had already spent one term of service in the field which her brother had left for the Congo.

Uncertainty as to the time of her actual departure compelled her to relinquish forthwith her engagement with Mrs. May, who was on the point of going abroad for some months. But she was opportunely invited to take another position, for the time being, which she rightly affirmed

that Providence had specially arranged for her. Her friend Mrs. Seymour required the help of a lady in her home, and was willing to receive Miss Thomas on terms which friendship dictated, and which friendship eagerly accepted. She was to regard herself as a visitor, and feel perfectly free to attend to her own affairs, and to depart whenever the call should come.

So Miss Thomas went from Hampstead to Highbury, where she passed the busy months of waiting in an atmosphere of sympathy and friendship. After some changes of arrangement it was ultimately fixed that she and Miss Comber should sail from Liverpool on March 5th. On Monday, March 3rd, a farewell meeting was held at Camden Road Church, and on behalf of the Sunday School, Mr. Parkinson presented Miss Thomas with a harmoniphon. She also received at the same meeting a medicine chest, the gift of Mr. Baynes, whose absence in consequence of illness was much deplored. There were some forty other presents privately given of which I have the list. It included items of practical utility. Among them, five pounds' worth of spoons, forks, and table requisites, from "the Ladies' Missionary Working Party"; and (equally useful) from other friends, four five-pound notes. Notable among the names of the donors are those of M. Gustave Masson, French Master at Harrow, Miss Thomas's uncle by marriage with her mother's sister; and the Rev. William Brock, minister of Heath Street, Hampstead, whose church Miss Thomas had attended during her stay in the district, and from whom she had received much of that dis-

cerning, sympathetic kindness which still endears him to all who come within its scope.

Miss Thomas spent the last fortnight with her friends, the Hartlands, at 34, Falkland Road, and on the morning of March 4th, she and Miss Comber left St. Pancras after an enthusiastic valediction from a large group of friends. They were accompanied to Liverpool by Mr. Percy Comber, Miss Comber's younger brother, and Miss Alice Hartland. Mrs. Fletcher of Edge Lane, whose daughter was on the field at Camerouns, entertained them, with warmest hospitality, and in the evening a drawing-room meeting was held, at which the Rev. John Jenkyn Brown presided.

The next day shortly after noon they embarked in a tender, and proceeded to board the ss. *Corisco*, which lay in the stream. Many friends elected to say "goodbye" on board, and when the bell rang and the tender left, two of them, Mr. Percy Comber and Miss Alice Hartland, remained as stowaways, and secured the unchartered pleasure of a voyage with their dear ones down the river and across the bar. But their deferred farewells must needs be said at last. They also were put off in turn, and the two young missionary women passed out to sea.

CHAPTER III

VOYAGE TO THE CAMEROONS, AND A SURFEIT OF ADVENTURES. 1884

THE trials of the missionary life commenced early for Miss Thomas. During the voyage to Madeira the weather was exceptionally bad, and she and Miss Comber endured the horrors of sea-sickness for a week. Happily their sorrows were mitigated by invincible good spirits. They "were very jolly all the time," made jokes of their own miseries, and when the doctor enquired with traditional sympathy whether they yearned to be flung overboard, his obliging suggestion was repelled with scorn. The ship carried no stewardess, and at first they found it embarrassing to be waited upon by a man. But "any port in a storm," and any help in the sickness which the storm produces! The steward was a nice kindly person, and they soon became used to his presence and grateful for his attendance. During the days of wild buffeting by wind and wave, the harbour of Madeira was looked forward to with strong desire, and it was a doleful hour in which the Captain expressed his fear that the badness of the weather would preclude his touch-

ing at the Island. That fear was discredited by the event; the weather moderated, and upon sighting land the sufferers were able to appear on deck.

They both found much comfort in the presence of a third lady, Mrs. Buckenham, who was going out to her husband, a Primitive Methodist missionary stationed at Fernando Po. The Captain's marked kindness was an additional comfort, and indeed the source of very many. His cabin on deck had been annexed by certain gentlemen as a smoking saloon, but upon the appearance of the missionary ladies, the smokers suffered summary eviction, and the cabin was placed at their service. On the morning of March 12th they steamed round Madeira and made the harbour in perfect weather, which permitted them to take unchecked delight in the lovely scenery. The Captain saw them ashore, secured for them a spacious, private, detached apartment at the hotel where he himself put up, and in the afternoon Miss Thomas sat down to write a merry letter to her "dear Mother," Mrs. Hartland.

As she writes her attention is confessedly distracted by the dazzling charms of the flower-garden she looks out upon, and the more sober, but more enthralling charms of the tea-table, which is being spread. Her week of sea-sickness is pleaded as an excuse for gloating over mere victuals, the validity of which plea the humane reader will immediately allow. Referring to the troubles passed, she writes gaily: "And we had many a laugh at our own expense. To see the boxes and chairs executing a jig in the middle of

the room, and then to hear the fearful crashes of crockery in the pantry next our cabin, ourselves making frantic efforts to get from one side of the room to the other, and ending by being landed on the floor in an elegant sitting posture, or coming up with a spin against the door—all this was very diverting.”

As the *Corisco* was timed to sail at nine o'clock the next morning, Miss Thomas and her friends had little opportunity of making acquaintance with Funchal. Yet, in the limited time at their disposal they moved about briskly, with eyes wide open, and acquired many vivid impressions of the natural beauties of the place and the non-English social novelties which appealed to them in the shops and in the streets.

From Madeira to Sierra Leone the voyage was pleasant as a picnic. Miss Thomas and Miss Comber were much in favour with their fellow-passengers, and the Captain made them his peculiar care. He was an English sailor of the best type, and though he had no special reverence for their mission, he unfeignedly admired their British pluck, in which they were at least his peers. Sometimes he told them dismal, tragical tales of Africa, with the purpose of testing their mettle, and when he found that they refused to be dismayed, he assured them they were just the kind of folk to do well on the West Coast, where courage and good spirits are the best defence against the hostilities of the deadly climate. One day he came upon them at afternoon tea, winked at their illicit spirit-stove, and craved to be allowed to join them. Thereafter, at this little

function, he was their daily guest. He told them "wonderful stories of his wife, of whom he was very proud," made his black boy "Dollar" their servant, and taught his retriever dog to amuse them and attend them. His apology for his rather more than conventional kindness was ingenious and conclusive. "At Liverpool the 'Sky-pilot' (Rev. John Jenkyn Brown) specially charged me to take good care of both of you, and I am going to fulfil my commission faithfully." His protégées so far imbued him with the missionary spirit that he promised to give a concert at Bonny in aid of the work. The promise may have been kept, but the fulfilment of it is not recorded.

On March 19th the *Corisco* was "off Sierra Leone." Nine days later she lay outside the bar at the mouth of Benin River. The Captain and some of his passengers had business up the river, and took the three missionary ladies with them. They were deposited in the launch by means of the crane and the chair, an experience which they found amusing, the time of their departure from the ship being 9 a.m. At the Bar the sea was rough to the point of ugliness, and the Captain regretted that he had brought the ladies; but there was no mishap, and very soon the voyagers, whose pulses had been quickened by the passage of the Bar, were enjoying the quiet waters of the mile-wide river, with its banks "dotted here and there by little towns." Miss Thomas shall tell in her own words the rest of the story of her Benin expedition:—

"As we stopped at the various traders' wharves while the Captain and some of the gentlemen

went ashore, the people came crowding down to look at us, as only two white ladies had passed up the river before, and that many years ago. Our eyes were the great attraction, which all happened to be light. One woman was very proud because she could manage to say, 'How do, Mammy?'

"We went on to see a Mr. Henderson whose house is built on an island. He is a very good man, and a total abstainer, so we determined to lunch with him. Upon arrival we knocked and made a great noise before we could get any answer. At last a man came, and most politely taking off his hat, inquired, 'You live, Mammy?' To which we responded, 'Yes, we live. You live?' Finally he brought a key and we went into the courtyard where we met Mr. Henderson whose astonishment was complete. He said that when he was told three white ladies had come, he surmised that the sailors of a ship in the river were having fun with him, and would not come down. We had a very nice lunch, and some delicious tea for which Mr. Henderson is noted. Among other presents he gave us a tin full of it. We commenced our return at 3.30 and had a very rough passage. Our little boat was tossed on the waves, and the spray kept breaking over us. Darkness fell, a tornado followed in our track, and the lightning was most splendid. We sat, well covered up, singing Sankey's hymns. It was a fine experience, and happily we reached the ship just before the rain fell."

On Sunday, March 30th, the *Corisco* reached Bonny, and on the morrow the mail steamer *Senegal*

arrived bringing two passengers whose presence was cordially welcomed; Mr. Buckenham, who had come so far to meet his wife, and Mr. Liley, of the Livingstone Inland Mission from the Congo. But the pleasure of meeting Mr. Liley was shadowed by the heavy news he bore. From him Miss Thomas received part of that terrible budget of evil tidings which greeted George Grenfell at Stanley Pool, when he returned from his boat journey to the equator on March 4th. She learned that Mr. Hartley, the new missionary, and the two engineers sent out to reconstruct the *Peace*, had all died on their journey up-country, and that the work on the Congo, passing dear to her, was gravely disorganised by the sickness of several workers. Moreover, a letter from Miss Saker announced that Mr. Lewis had broken down and gone south, Miss Fletcher was ailing, while the writer herself was in such poor case that she would be compelled to start for a trip to Gaboon immediately upon the arrival of Miss Thomas. This would necessitate that Miss Comber should come to Bethel Station, Cameroons, to remain with Miss Thomas during Miss Saker's absence, instead of commencing her work forthwith at Victoria.

The young missionaries were delayed several days at Bonny, made a visit to Opobo, and called upon King Ja-Ja, whose hospitality they enjoyed, not without effort. The palm oil "chop" was an ordeal. The King himself was a nice man and friendly, but his house was frightfully dirty and wore the aspect of a curiosity shop, promiscuously furnished with odds and ends presented him by the traders. Miss Thomas and the other ladies

were permitted to visit his wives, concerning which visit she significantly remarks: "It was awful." The bright side of a depressing experience was the King's earnestly expressed desire that a white missionary should come to reside in his town, and she had some hope that Mr. Buckenham's society might be able to meet his wish.

Before leaving Bonny Miss Thomas and Miss Comber said "goodbye" to the *Corisco* and its genial captain, and were transhipped to the *Loanda*. A few days later they arrived at Victoria, and the elements accorded them a boisterous welcome, as the following extract from the *Missionary Herald* will make apparent:—

"On April 4th Miss Comber and Miss Gwen Thomas safely reached Victoria. Miss Comber writes: 'When we reached Victoria, Mrs. Thomson came on the vessel to meet us, and when all was ready we started for the shore in two boats—our mission boat, and the ship's boat—Mrs. Quintin Thomson, the doctor and the purser of the ship, going in the mission boat, while Miss Thomas and I went with the Captain in the ship's boat. When we were near the shore a very large wave came suddenly, and before the Kroo-boys had time to pull away from it, it broke over us and turned the boat right over, and we directly found ourselves in the water. Fortunately the other boat was not far off, and very quickly came back for us and picked us up before we had been in the water many minutes. The children were all on the beach waiting to welcome us with singing, but when they saw Miss Thomas carried to the house (she had lost her shoes) and me walking

up drenched with water, they said they were "not fit to sing." Happily we are none the worse for our wetting. This happened on Saturday. On Sunday night we had the heaviest tornado I have ever known. Our people say there has not been so strong a one for twenty-three years. Unfortunately it did a good deal of damage to Brook Mount, taking down the front piazza and a good deal of the roof. It happened just as we were going to bed, and a second time we got a wetting; so we had rather a rough welcome to Africa.'

"From Bethel Miss Thomas adds: 'The country is all so beautiful, and the climate so delightful, that it is hard to understand it is so unhealthy. I am very anxious to get on with the Dualla language, as I see it will be very necessary here. We had a most delightful day yesterday (Sunday). Miss Saker is away, just now, having gone South for her health. But we were just in time to see her before she left, and Miss Comber is with me now. I am so glad and thankful to be at last really engaged in mission work in Africa. We have six children in the house now, and there are several more wanting to come.'"

Miss Thomas was an excellent correspondent from the beginning of her missionary life, but not many of her earliest African letters are available, and the reader must be content with fragmentary notes of the beginnings of her work. The passage quoted above was written on or about April 16th, and on that date, in a letter to Miss Alice Hartland, she states that she is very well, and has not had a single headache since

leaving England. The rains are just commencing. She has had a walk through the town with Mr. Silvey, and is impressed by the size of it. In the absence of King Aqua she has been granted the honour of an interview with his chief wife. She has also paid a visit to the week-old baby of Dubundu, the native pastor. The lady was almost as bare of clothing as the baby. The one struck her as "horrid-looking," the other as "funny." Definite arrangements as regards her particular work are postponed, pending the return of Miss Saker, who is expected home in ten days. A present is enclosed for "Mother's" birthday.

On April 21st Miss Thomas reports receiving the sad news of the death of Mr. Johnstone, a Christian trader, residing at Bonny, who had shown much kindness to her and her friends during their stay at that port. Assured of his sympathy, they had been able to speak to him with grateful freedom of their ideals and their work. He had traded on the coast for fifteen years, was due home in two months, but was suddenly stricken down with erysipelas and died. The kind heart of the writer is heavy with the thought of the desolation which the news will bear to his wife and children in England. Flags are flying half-mast in the river. An English sailor lies dead, who leaves a wife and nine children in England. The Mission people are sending a wreath for his burial.

May 12th was the anniversary of John Hartland's death, and Miss Thomas wrote to his mother assured that both would be "thinking of the dear one who, this day last year, went home

to God." Sad news has come from the Congo, including a report of the very serious illness of Thomas Comber. During Miss Saker's continued absence Miss Comber is to remain with Miss Thomas, much to her joy, as they are like-minded. But the tidings of her brother's illness, and the necessity of a flying visit to Victoria, have prostrated Miss Comber with fever, through which she is affectionately nursed by her friend. Mr. Lewis has come over from Victoria, and Miss Thomas finds him "nice," and "a thorough Welshman." He had lent her a book on Wales, which interests her much. But the only time for a good read is the time of recovering from fever. The Sunday services are mostly in Dualla, and although they include a short address in English, it is framed with a view to local capacities and requirements, and her soul longs for a Sunday at Camden Road with Mr. Tucker, to whom she sends her love.

Miss Alice Hartland had helped Miss Thomas with some of her packing, and on May 17th the results were reported. A good many things had come to grief. A number of books needed to have their covers washed and to be laid in the sun to dry—a statement which the book-lover will read with shuddering. But the worst misfortune was not to be laid to the charge of the amateur packers. The Kroo-boys who carried the cases must needs drop something, and with fine discrimination they chose a case containing a bath filled with crockery. The smash was effective, and the details may be left to imagination.

In this letter Miss Thomas reports her continued

good health, but complains of bad nights as her worst trouble. "The Kroo-boys on the beach strike every hour by banging something which sounds like a tin tray. The natives are constantly beating their tomtoms, which sets our dog 'Fidele' barking. Then the goats begin to bleat, and the little dogs in the yard to howl, so that between them all it is horrible. As this happens almost every night, and storms are frequent, a good night is consequently a rare blessing."

Miss Saker and Mr. Lewis are expected from Victoria, their boat is in the river. Sunday was enjoyed. Miss Thomas took the two senior boys' classes, and hopes that a senior boys' class will be allotted to her. "They understand English properly and are very intelligent."

A month later she refers to a letter which has told of her first attack of fever and how wonderfully she had got over it. Her friends think she will not have it so badly again. Her fevers are likely to be "strong," but it is believed she can bear them better than most people, so anxiety about her is to be dismissed.

Miss Fletcher, of Victoria, is returning home broken down. The sorrow of her friends is forecast and deplored, and Miss Comber's ensuing loneliness at Victoria occasions solicitude. In this letter, dated June 17th, and addressed to Mrs. Hartland, Miss Thomas pleads for more Camden Road news and adds, touchingly: "When I was ill, and my head was so bad that I could get no sleep, I kept fancying if I could only hear Mr. Tucker read something it would send me to sleep. Of course it was only fancy, but it was the one

thing I seemed to long for." In consequence of the fever her hair has been cut quite short like a boy's. She cares nothing for the look of it, and it will be much better in case of the recurrence of fever.

On July 11th Miss Thomas was at Victoria whither she had been hastily summoned to attend Miss Comber who was down with fever and dysentery. Pending Miss Thomas's arrival Mr. Lewis had acted as doctor and nurse, and his gentleness and skill were gratefully appreciated by his patient and by her nurse, when she came. The other missionaries at Victoria, Mr. Hay and Mr. Pinnock, were also full of kindness and concern. Referring to her call from Bethel Station, Miss Thomas says :—

"This is how the work is interrupted here. I will try to give you an idea of it from this week's experience. Miss Saker and I had just been making new arrangements for the management of our school, and had planned out our daily work afresh. On Monday morning we had told the girls of our new arrangements. We had also set apart a time every day in which Mr. Silvey and I were to read Dualla with Miss Saker. She had not been well enough for this previously. Well, on Monday evening, Mr. Silvey came running in with Mr. Burnley bringing letters from Mr. Lewis requesting me to come at once. First, they had to knock up some men and go to Dr. Allen's ship to learn his opinion of the treatment adopted. It was half-past one a.m. when they returned. Meanwhile I got my things ready and at 6 a.m. started. The travelling is bad in the rainy season. . . .

“I think you may like to know something about the journey between Cameroons and Victoria. First we are carried by Kroo-boys into the boat, which is a six-oared lifeboat with an awning over one end. Then our course lies down the river for about twenty miles. After that we cross a stretch of sea, and then turn into creeks, which run between mangrove swamps. This time, about eleven o'clock, the boat was pulled up to the bank, and tied fast to a tree. Then we all had ‘chop.’ . . . The Kroo-boys eat theirs at the other end of the boat. After rather a rough passage we reached Bimbia about 8 p.m. The sea was too rough to go further that night. I never saw anything more beautiful than the scene as I lay in the boat in Bimbia Bay. The water there was comparatively calm, while outside one could see the raging breakers. The sky was clear overhead, the moon shining brilliantly upon the little town, which consists of a few native houses, surrounded by loveliest trees. There is only one white man's house, that of the German Agent, at which I was forced to stay the night. He was very kind, got me supper, made up a bed for me, and provided a black girl to sleep with me and to wait upon me. The next morning we started at sunrise, and arrived here (Victoria) at half-past eight. Mr. Lewis, Mr. Hay and John Pinnock were on the beach waiting for me. Mr. Lewis has just come in to say the mail is leaving to-night, so I must not write more. Miss Comber has made good progress. She is sitting up in her room, and with assistance walked twice round the sitting-room to-day. I think she will do well

now, with care; but she will need to go for a trip South before resuming her work. Mr. Hay and John Pinnock are both down with fever, and very ill, especially the former. Mr. Lewis is staying with both and nursing both. I do trust they will get over it well. I am very anxious about Mr. Hay. There is a man-of-war at anchor here now. Mr. Lewis and I went on board yesterday for a change. That was before John Pinnock fell ill. The doctor came ashore and saw the two patients, but he is evidently not very reliable. We think he had been drinking. Mr. Lewis is becoming quite a doctor now. I cannot write more."

As Mr. Lewis, whose name has been mentioned two or three times, is destined to take a very prominent place in this life-story, it is fitting that at least a few words of formal introduction should be accorded to him; and if they are but few, the reader must know that my hand is restrained by his express desire.

Thomas Lewis was born at Whitland, Carmarthenshire, in 1859. He was a Welsh-speaking Welshman, and his early Christian work was done in the vernacular. He can still preach in Welsh upon occasion, though he has lost some of his former fluency. But when he preaches in English his accent and his lilt bewray him. In the order of Providence he learned to work in wood and iron before he studied theology, and his skill as a handicraftsman has been scarcely less useful to him in his African career than his book-learning. After an honourable course at Haverfordwest College he was accepted by the B.M.S. for service in Africa,



MR. GEORGE THOMAS.
MISS THOMAS
(At the age of 17).

MRS. THOMAS.
REV. THOMAS LEWIS.
(Photo by Mr. Wickens, Pangor.)

and was sent to the Cameroons in 1883. When Mr. Lewis first met Miss Thomas he was engaged to Miss Phillips of Haverfordwest, and how he was happily married and swiftly bereaved will be told in the next chapter.

On August 5th Miss Thomas writes of "our troubles" which came in sequence to the anxious stay at Victoria. She herself has been down with fever, has made a good recovery, but has been "silly enough" to sprain her ankle. Yet on the whole she is in good form, and is pronounced "wonderful" by the local doctor. But Miss Saker's continued and alarming illness will necessitate her return home. Her things are packed, they are awaiting the arrival of the mail, and Miss Thomas is to accompany her part way. Miss Thomas continues: "It is now a month since I went to Victoria to nurse Miss Comber, and I have been nursing ever since with an interval of five days for my own fever." The news from Victoria is bad. Miss Comber is very unwell; Mr. Hay is very ill; and the work is at a standstill.

The mail steamer *Bonny* arrived on August 19th under the command of Captain Dyson, who had shown Miss Thomas and Miss Comber so much kindness on their voyage out from Liverpool. Captain Dyson was amazed and delighted to find his young friend looking so well—better than when she left England, though perceptibly thinner. Mr. and Mrs. Buckenham were with Captain Dyson, and they all spent a day at the Mission. Miss Saker was placed in the Captain's boat, in a bed, and carried aboard the

Bonny, and the homeward voyage was commenced.

While at sea Miss Thomas herself fell ill, and was constrained to go much further than she intended, even to Madeira. Misadventures retard her return, and on October 29th she is still at sea, and dates from the "*ss. Congo*, between Akassa and Bonny." Her letter will return from the Cameroons by the mail ship on which she writes. She is quite a good sailor now; never feels sick, and can take her constitutional, however badly the ship may be rolling. But her mind is gravely exercised by grievous thoughts of the long interruption of her work, and the heavy expense to the Society, which this voyage entails. She is dreading to hear from the Mission House lest the official letter may convey rebuke, and Mr. Baynes may be vexed by action on her part which may seem to be ill advised. A vain fear, at the recollection of which she would smile in later years, when she came to know how warm was Mr. Baynes's friendship for her, and how from earliest days his insight into character had taught him to place implicit reliance upon her good feeling and her good sense. Meanwhile she adds grimly: "I'll never come bringing invalids home again"—the mere voice of a mood which sympathy will know how to interpret.

While writing this letter her thoughts turn to Christmas. At the great anniversary seasons, friends far sundered, meet in spirit, and she will think much of dear ones at home; though on Christmas day she will be very busy, as the school treat at Bethel will then take place. Little

did Miss Thomas realise when she wrote this down, how strange would be the conditions in which that treat would be held, and how little of outward peace the birthday of the Prince of Peace would bring to the Cameroons. The German annexation had been negotiated without the consent of certain local rulers who were concerned, and this fact bred discontent which ultimately fomented insurrection and internecine hostilities between the chiefs who were aggrieved. For an account of the general aspect of the German troubles the reader is referred to Note A at the end of the book. The volcanic upheaval came at the close of the year, and the following graphic letter gives the personal experiences of Miss Thomas, and affords an early disclosure of the heroic material of which she was made :—

“BETHEL STATION.

December 16, 1884.

“MY DEAREST MOTHER,—I am afraid you will get short letters from me this time. The mail is due in two days, I have not a line written yet, and I am so busy this week. I had a most pleasant time at Victoria, and when Mr. Comber went [who had called at Victoria on his way home from Congo], Mr. Lewis came to fetch me back. By the by, he told me some time ago to give his kind regards to you and to say that he had heard much about you, and hoped some day to make your acquaintance. The little steamer did not come, so I was forced to return in the boat. The voyage was rather long, but we arrived none the worse for it. The fact was I slept nearly

all the way. We were very naughty at Victoria and used to stay up very late talking. Not having seen one another for so long, we had heaps to say. I left Carrie well, and also John Pinnock.

"The river here is in a most unsettled state. There is fighting all round us, but it has not come to our town yet. It is all in consequence of the German occupation, and the Germans encourage it. To-day Bell Town has been burnt down. I am now expecting Mr. Lewis to tea, so shall hear all about it. Two men were put to death there this morning, and one at Hickory yesterday. Jibarri was burnt down on Monday. The native teacher has fled, and the place is deserted. Firing is constantly going on, and war canoes are passing up and down the river. Do not be alarmed for me. We are quite safe, and the trouble has not affected our people yet.

"It seems so strange to think that Christmas is so near, I can hardly believe it. We are having fine hot weather, though the rains have not entirely ceased. Our school examinations are in course this week, and on Thursday we hold a public examination in the chapel. I must tell you about it next time. Our treat is fixed for Friday, and other treats are to be held at other stations during next week. Of course it entails work in looking out prizes, presents, &c., and on Friday Mr. Lewis is going to show the magic lantern. The children have come out pretty well in the examinations. Of course the subjects are elementary: writing, reading, spelling, dictation, sums, tables, needlework, and recitation of hymns.

"December 22, 1884. Since writing the foregoing

so much has happened that will be interesting to all my friends that I beg you to let Mr. Tucker see this letter, and any others who may desire, for I cannot write a second, I have so much to tell. I have already told you of the unsettled state of the river. On Friday last (this is Monday) we heard that there were two German warships at the Bar, and on Saturday morning two small steamers came up the river towing boatloads of soldiers. Without giving any notice, they steamed up to Hickory Town, firing at every canoe on their way, landed men at Hickory, who set fire to the town while their comrades kept up a fusillade from the boats. Epea was down here and afraid to return. But his wife and children were at Hickory, so Mr. Silvey went up with him immediately, and sent Mrs. Epea and the children down to us, remaining himself with Epea. He found that Mr. Schmidt (of the German House) had saved our Mission House, but the chapel and schoolroom were burnt to the ground. (By this time the house is burnt also. The people have all fled to the bush, and the town is destroyed.) When Mr. Silvey returned he brought with him about fifty people, whom we managed to sleep as best we could, some in our house and some in the school-house. In the meantime the Germans steamed down the river and attacked Joss Town, which adjoins Bell Town. There they met with most determined resistance, and at first were driven back, forty-one of their soldiers being killed. The Joss people also went to Schmidt's beach, dragged out Mr. Hammer (the clerk in charge) took him into the bush and

killed him. The fighting went on for hours. Mr. Lewis could not leave, having no boat; and he and his two boys had to turn up the table and lie behind it, as the bullets were flying through the house; one passed close to his ear. He did not reach us until 5 p.m., when the tide went down, and he could walk along the beach, having had a very narrow escape. Of course all this time I was alone here and very anxious about Mr. Silvey and Mr. Lewis. At the first sound of firing the people came rushing to the Mission House being terribly frightened, as both the towns involved in the trouble are so close that we could see them burning. The firing was going on all around, and a gunboat was passing up and down in front of this town, firing on the beach. One of the white men was wounded, and had to be carried to Buchan's ship. Of course we did not know what was going to happen next. The house was crowded with people, and I did my best to quiet them, but with no great success.

"Yesterday we were hoping for a quiet day. We held a prayer-meeting in the morning instead of the service, and had Sunday School as usual. But shortly after our return home, the Mission premises were surrounded by hundreds of German soldiers who commenced searching for Hickory and Joss people. Our houses were full of people, but they were not those whom the Germans wanted. Yet they persisted in believing that we were hiding their enemies. They searched every nook and corner of Mr. Silvey's house, and of mine, walking about with loaded revolvers in their hands, with which they threatened Mr. Silvey

and Mr. Lewis. They were a little more polite to me. My house was full of women and children, who were so frightened that they begged me not to leave them even to go into the next room. The Germans then compelled Mr. Lewis to go with them to Bell Town that they might search the house there, which is completely ruined, all his work there having gone for nothing. Bethel Station only is left now, there being neither buildings nor people at the others. Yesterday the Germans sent round a proclamation saying that any persons who directly or indirectly help the disaffected people will be treated as enemies and banished. This morning one of the warships came up the river and threw shells into Hickory, completing the ruin. It does seem dreadful that all this cruel work should be done by people calling themselves Christians. You may imagine that it has been, and is, a very anxious time for us all. But we have great cause for thankfulness, as we are all well. I am only afraid this news will reach you before our letters and cause anxiety on our behalf. What will be the result to the Mission we cannot tell. We hear that the Basle Mission are coming. (It is the best Mission on the coast.) In that case I suppose our Mission will give up the work. It does seem a pity. But it will require a large staff to do any good, so much building will be necessary. I am especially sorry about Hickory. It was such a nice little station, and had the best of our chapels. How strange that these things should be permitted. But the work is God's, and we must leave it in His hands. The worst thing about the Germans

is their manner of treating the people. Morgan, the pilot, is one of our best men, a very superior person. They put a rope round his neck, and told him they would hang him if he did not bring the man-of-war properly up the river. The people are full of comparisons between the English and the Germans, but little complimentary to the latter.

“Now I will turn to a more pleasant subject. Last Thursday we held a public examination of our schools in the chapel, and invited parents and friends. The children behaved nicely, sang, recited, and were examined in tables and spelling. Mr. Lewis presided and gave the prizes, which consisted of work-boxes, desks, books, shirts, &c. Then on Friday we held our treat, and had a fine time. My arms are still stiff from the effects of it. We began, in the morning, to cut up the pork, which I had cooked the previous day. It took me and two of my boys more than an hour to do this, and it was hot work. Meanwhile two of the women were cooking the rice in the yard, while Mrs. Williams made the fish soup in her house. The soup and the rice were then put into baths and carried into the chapel. When all was ready, and two tables covered with toys for ‘dashes,’ the children were let in. Each brought a plate or something equivalent (in many instances a wash-basin or old vegetable dish). Some brought spoons, but the majority were content with their fingers. Mr. Lewis, Mr. Silvey and I did ‘the helping,’ while some of the women and big boys ‘waited.’ You should have heard the noise! When they had eaten as much as

they could, each one received a toy, and they were sent out to play. Meanwhile we cleared up the fragments and came home to rest and have dinner. After dinner we went out to join their games, and were soon hard at work. The play included races, racing in sacks, blind-man's-buff, round the mulberry bush, orange and lemons, &c. You may imagine that it was rather hot work. Then about five o'clock we set them scrambling for sweets and nuts, and having given to each one a packet of sweets, we came in to our tea. After tea, as soon as it was dark, the magic-lantern sheet was put up, outside the big house, and Mr. Lewis showed the pictures to a very large audience. Indeed, most of the townspeople turned out. They behaved very well, and thoroughly enjoyed the exhibition. When the pictures were finished we sang, "I think when I read that sweet story of old," which was thrown upon the screen, and so brought to an end a very pleasant, though very tiring day. Everything went off well, and those concerned departed having thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Of course all the other treats are stopped by this horrid fighting; but I am glad we held ours when we did.

"December 24th.

"I have written the latter part of this letter separately, so that you may lend it. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Silvey are writing to Mr. Baynes so that he will know all about the trouble. I should be glad if you could copy my account and send it to Mrs. Seymour.

"A little branch steamer has just come up the river, and will take letters early to-morrow morning. The *Benguela* came to the Bar a few days ago, but could not get up river on account of the fighting. I am so disappointed at getting no Christmas letters, and so are we all. We hear that the English Consul and a British man-of-war are coming to-morrow. The pilot has gone down to bring her up. I hope the Germans will have to pay for what they have done. Our people are all in panic, and are running away as fast as they can, some to Victoria and others to the bush. Half the town is deserted.

"I shall be thinking of you all to-morrow. Of course Mr. Silvey, Mr. Lewis, and I are going to spend the day together. We have had a goat killed, and I shall have one of Morton's puddings. I would have made one but we cannot get suet, and eggs are very scarce just now. If all is well, we shall have a merry evening with our house-children. But I expect there will be great excitement as soon as the Consul comes, so I cannot really tell what we shall do. You must please give my love to my sister, and to any kind friends who may ask after me. I am sure they will excuse my not writing when they hear the cause.

"Yesterday we went to Bell Town. It is a complete ruin, and not a person was to be seen. Hickory is even worse, I believe, if that be possible. Well, I must finish now as it is bedtime. And with very much love to all,

"I am,

"Yours lovingly,

"GWEN."

“PS.—I forgot to say that I am quite well; never felt better in my life. If you should see Miss Saker, please tell her all, as I cannot write to her now. I do not understand not hearing from any of you by this mail. I only had two letters, one from Miss Saker, and one from Miss Phillips. I did want some Christmas letters. I suppose I shall not get them now for another month, and we are all in the same box.

“I am sure if any of you want adventures, you had better come to Africa. I have had enough in eight months to last for some time.”

CHAPTER IV

ORANGE BLOSSOMS AND *IMMORTELLES*. 1885

AT this period a strong friendship was formed between Mr. Lewis and Miss Thomas which made for joy and strength in both their lives. It could hardly have been otherwise. They were kindred spirits and were much thrown together in experiences which taxed and tested the best that was in them; and each was conscious that the other had endured the testing well. Labour, sickness, peril had proved them, under intimate mutual observation, to be tireless in service, patient in pain, and endowed with high courage. Compelled by the exigencies of their lot, they had in turn nursed each other through long days and nights of heavy sickness, when the angel of death seemed to hover at the door in indecision. They had passed through scenes of panic without display of fear. In tedious hours of convalescence they had exchanged confidences; the woman had spoken of her dear transfigured sorrow, and the man had spoken of those tender hopes which, in the winter of desolation, made music of spring within his heart. So they became as brother and sister, and enjoyed high friendship, serene and unperplexed

by such sentiment as the order of their lives disallowed. That this is all true is amply proved by the joyous, sisterly interest which Miss Thomas took in the anticipations of Mr. Lewis's marriage, by her part in the celebration of the event, and by her unfeigned sorrow in the pathetic sequel; all which things her letters most artlessly record.

But in addition to her high spirits, sober saintliness, and heroic courage, Miss Thomas was endowed with a full share of common sense. She was woman of the world enough to be aware that a young wife might not regard with perfect complacency such close comradeship as she and Mr. Lewis had enjoyed, and wisely prepared herself for some diminution of friendly intercourse, with ensuing access of loneliness. Happily this forecast of worldly wisdom was proved to be superfluous. Of course Miss Phillips had heard all about the friendship, and when she came, in the trustfulness of perfect love which casteth out fear, she straightway took Miss Thomas to her heart, claimed her as a sister, and enriched her life with that mystic gold which is incorruptible, getting back as much again in sweet commerce which flourished more and more through all the hurrying days of their brief friendship, even until its latest hour. This also Miss Thomas has movingly set down, as will presently appear.

It must be confessed that this chapter is concerned with other matters than a wedding and a funeral, but at this stage these two events have assumed a certain dominant interest in my mind, as the title indicates, and herein I expect to secure the sympathy of the reader.

The events recorded in the previous chapter had left the future of the English Mission at the Cameroons in grave uncertainty. Meanwhile the Baptist Missionary Society made representations to the German Government, protesting against the arbitrary and unjust behaviour of its agents, and demanding compensation for the destruction of its property; which compensation was never received. Pending unknown providential issues the work was continued as far as possible on the old lines. In January, 1885, Mr. Silvey returned to England, and Mr. Lewis and Miss Thomas were left alone in charge of the Mission at Bethel Station. Mr. Silvey was sorely missed, especially in the educational work. He had proved, as Miss Thomas testifies, "a capital schoolmaster," and his departure necessitated new arrangements which added to her burdens. She took charge of his school, besides her own three classes. John Diboll, one of the native teachers, managed the Lower School, and Alfred Bell, the Infants. Miss Thomas ascribes her slow progress in Dualla to the fact that all her teaching was done in English. This pleased the people well, who were eager to obtain efficiency in the use of our tongue, and had complained that Miss Saker taught in Dualla. Miss Thomas wishes that she were able to incur the same criticism.

In a letter to Mrs. Hartland, which Mr. Silvey carried with him and posted in England, Miss Thomas writes: "It seems ages since I left England. I feel as though I had been in Africa all my life; and it is not so strange as I anticipated. I suppose and hope that our next excite-

ment will be the arrival of Miss Phillips. I hear that Mrs. Lyall is coming with her, to see her husband's grave, and then is going to labour as a missionary [at Calabar]."

The hoped-for excitement was long delayed. At the end of March Miss Thomas wrote again to Mrs. Hartland: "Mr. Lewis tells me to send his love to you, we often talk about you and about dear John, and he tells me all about his 'intended.' Poor man, he will be disappointed this mail again, for we hear she is not coming out until the next. It really is too bad as there have been plenty of opportunities lately. He says I cheer him up. I do my best, and he is not low-spirited at all. But it is very trying for him, and for her too. We have just had a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Hay. They came quite unexpectedly on their way back from Calabar, and stayed from Friday till Tuesday. They were both fairly well. . . . I am wondering whom you will get for pastor. How strange it must seem without dear Mr. Tucker! Give him my love if you ever see him."

Late in April Miss Thomas records that she has been suffering from bilious fevers, and her friends must not be surprised by news of her return. Change is recommended, but she feels, in the circumstances of the Mission, it would be absurd to incur the expense of a trip south. The coming of the wet season, however, has brought hope of better health. Mr. Lewis has also suffered much from fever, but has patched himself up by going out in his boat. They are growing weary of awaiting the arrival of Miss Phillips and Mr.

Fuller. If she does not come soon, it will scarcely be worth while for her to come at all, as Mr. Lewis's return cannot be long postponed. Meanwhile they are both reasonably well, but the school work has suffered damage through their illness. Some Victoria people, arriving from the Congo, have brought the heavy news that three more missionaries have succumbed, and Miss Thomas wonders whether these casualties are due to the deadliness of the climate or to want of due care on the part of the victims. The letter continues:—

“The Sunday before last we had a baptism of nine converts here. I was so sorry to be in bed and unable to be present at the service. The work is very promising, I think, especially considering the many drawbacks it has had to contend with. Whatever society comes here after us will have a fine field to work in. Sometimes I can't help wondering if it would not have been better to develop the work from here, with a good base station ready established, and native teachers to hand, than to begin the new work on the Congo. But, however, that is done, and I suppose the days of this Mission are numbered, as far as we are concerned.”

On May 13th Mr. Lewis wrote to Mrs. Hartland, at the request of Miss Thomas, to explain her own silence. She is recovering from another severe attack of bilious fever. When she fell ill Mr. Lewis was himself in bed; but the next day he was able to attend her. She is better, but not well enough to write. He proceeds: “We are now looking forward to the arrival of Mr. and

Mrs. Fuller, and I venture to hope that Miss Phillips will accompany them. We have had no definite news.

"You will have heard of the death of Mrs. Buckenham of Fernando Po. Mr. Buckenham brought her here on board the *Volta* three weeks ago, hoping she would get better. She could not come ashore, and died on the ship. Her remains are now lying in our graveyard, where she was buried the next day. Poor Mr. Buckenham has gone home in the *Benguela*. Things here are much as usual. The Germans are fairly quiet; but the natives are profoundly unsettled, and we do not know what they will do. A large number of them are in the bush; the rainy season is coming on, and they will be homeless. This is hard.

"We heard from Victoria yesterday, and the friends there are well. It is very evident that the Committee intend to relinquish this Mission. It is a great pity, and yet I believe it to be the best course. I have heard that the authorities are going to compel the teaching of German in our schools. I confess I would rather leave at once than Germanise these people. However, we trust that all will be for the best in the end."

The year wore on with its round of duties varied by intervals of suffering—school-work, nursing, fevers—and the long-looked-for arrival of Miss Phillips was still in anticipation. At the end of August, however, it was known at Cameroons that she had sailed in the *Lualaba*, accompanied, not by Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, but by Mr. Comber, and a band of young missionaries, includ-

ing his own brother Percy, whom he was joyously conveying to the Congo. And here I must interrupt the story for a moment to introduce the following significant little letter. It was addressed by Miss Thomas to her three nieces, the daughters of her sister, Mrs. Percival.

“BETHEL STATION, CAMEROONS.

“August 29, 1885.

“MY DEAR ETHEL, EVA AND BEATRICE,—I have written to Ethel already, but when I received your mother’s letter, with the good news it contained, I felt I must write to you, if only a few lines, to tell you how very glad I am to hear that all three of you have learnt to love the dear Saviour, and have come forward to confess His Name. Although I am so far from you, you may be sure I often think of you and pray for you, and I am so glad that you have chosen the right way thus early, and that all your lives will be given to His service. I hope that you will all become very useful Christians, and that each of you will in time find some direct work to do for the Master. But after all I feel more and more convinced that it is in the little things of everyday life we can best show our love to Him.

“That He may bless you all and keep you very near Himself, is the earnest prayer of

“Your loving aunt,

GWENNIE.”

“The excitement” which was looked for as imminent in January came in September. On the 10th news was received in Cameroons that

the *Lualaba* was due at Calabar some few days later. For the rest of this chapter I leave the narrative to Miss Thomas, who shall tell, in her own words, of the burst of happy sunshine, and of its sudden dire eclipse, assured that her artless recital of the happenings, written only for the loving eyes of friends, with no faintest dream of publication, will be immeasurably more affecting than any studied treatment of my own.

On September 14th Miss Thomas sat down in the Mission House at Old Calabar and commenced a letter to Mrs. Hartland, accounting at the outset for her new address :—

“On Friday morning (this is Tuesday) the *Loanda* came into Cameroons with our mails, which included a letter from Mr. Comber telling Mr. Lewis that he was to meet Miss Phillips here. Their ship would arrive on Monday, so the only course open to him was to start off by the *Loanda*. He was worried about leaving me alone, as the time of return was uncertain, so I decided to accompany him and get a change. The steamer was timed to start on Saturday, but fortunately waited until Sunday morning, for we had invited John Pinnock for the wedding, and arriving on Saturday night he was able to come with us. We started early on Sunday morning, and as we were all seasick no one of us could laugh at the others. In the afternoon we reached Fernando Po, and went on shore to see Mr. and Mrs. Welford, who have taken the Buckenhams’ place there. The Spanish authorities are most arbitrary. We found that they had put Mr. Welford in prison, and that poor Mrs. Welford was sick. Of course she was delighted to see me

and I stayed with her while Mr. Lewis and John obtained permission and went to visit her husband."

"October 2nd. [Bethel Station, Cameroons.] So much has happened since I wrote the above, which you will like to hear, that I think I must send you a kind of diary, which you must please allow my sister, and any other interested friends, to read, as I cannot write it twice. Well, just after I had written the piece above we heard the Kroo-boys shouting, and knew that the *Lualaba* was coming up the river. [At Old Calabar on September 14th.] We rushed over to the Ludwigs to tell them, then returned, took a hurried meal, and as a storm was coming on got into thick dresses and mackintoshes and made haste down to the beach, where the others were waiting for us. Very soon we were on board the *Lualaba*. Mr. Lewis made his way to the ladies' cabin, while I was receiving very warm greetings from Tom and Percy Comber. Then I was introduced to the others, and was very pleased to see such a nice band of young men, for they all seem nice. I do trust they may have good health. Then I went in to see Miss Phillips, with whom I felt at home immediately. We all went on shore together, took tea, inspected the Mission premises, and called on Mrs. Beadie, who was ill. We finished up the evening at Mrs. Ludwig's. Miss Phillips stayed with me, and we slept together. Unfortunately I got fever in the night, which put an end to my going about. The next day we were to visit Creek Town, but Mrs. Lyall very kindly remained at home to look after me, and the next day also.

"I was much amused to have all the young

missionaries coming in to see what African fever was like. Of course Percy was as playful as ever, and wanted to take my temperature about every half-hour. On Friday morning I was a little better, but still in bed, and the *Redland*, a small steamer, was timed to start for the Cameroons. So there was a grand discussion as to what was to be done with me. Mr. Lewis could not remain away any longer, but we did not like Miss Phillips to go on alone with him and John Pinnock, knowing what a place this is for talk. I begged to be allowed to return with them, so Mr. Lewis sent for Mr. Comber, and left him to decide. At first he would not hear of my going, but ultimately it was settled that I should do so, as Mrs. Lyall was willing to go too. So I was carried down to the beach in a hammock, Mr. Comber coming to see us off. At night a tornado broke upon us and Mrs. Lyall and I were very seasick. Miss Phillips kept well, and by the time we reached Cameroons we were all right. I have had no fever since.

“We received a very warm welcome from the people, who were full of curiosity to see ‘Mrs. Lewis.’ The next day was Sunday, and we rested quietly. On Monday Mr. Lewis went to make arrangements for the wedding, which had been fixed for the following day, but found that according to the German law three days’ notice must be given to all the white residents, which necessitated the postponement of the event until Saturday. . . . On Tuesday we all went to the Governor’s, as we were to be witnesses of the marriage. The authorities are very particular. Mrs. Lyall had to declare that she knew Miss Phillips had been sent

out by the Society, and we were minutely questioned as to our names, ages, birthplaces, professions, and so on.

“On Wednesday we gave all our house children (and ourselves too) a treat by taking them for a picnic to Didumbari beach.”

There follows an account of the picnic, piquant and diverting enough, but too long to be inserted here. Thursday was a quiet day, but on Friday everybody concerned was cumbered with much serving in preparation for the long-looked-for rejoicing. The narrative continues:—

“We were determined to have as nice and home-like a wedding as was possible in our circumstances. To avoid work upon *the day* a cold breakfast was arranged. On Saturday the weather was most kind. The sun shone brightly, and everything looked beautiful. The marriage took place at Bethel Chapel at half-past nine. Miss Phillips, who looked charming in her bridal attire, wore a cream satin dress, very simply made, and a white hat trimmed with lace. A long spray of real orange-blossom encircled her neck, and she carried a bouquet of blue and white flowers culled from our garden. I wore my embroidered tussore, with the hat you sent out; and Mrs. Lyall, who acted as mother and gave her away, a thin black silk, with hat to match. The children all had new dresses, and each carried a new handkerchief, in which was tied up as much rice as it would hold. John performed the ceremony, and all the way home the happy pair were well pelted with rice. The breakfast was laid in my house, and the table really looked quite pretty

with abundance of flowers, and the cake, decorated with ferns, which Mrs. Lyall had brought with her.

“Later in the day we went off in the boat to attend the civil marriage, and you would have laughed to see the undignified manner in which the bride and bride’s-maids secured their places. The tide was far out, and we were handed about from one man to another as if we were babies in long clothes. We called for Dr. Allen on our way, as he was to be one of the witnesses. When we arrived at Government House, we found the Governor (Baron Von Soden) and his secretary awaiting us in full uniform. We sat round a table, and when all the recorded particulars had been read over the bride and bridegroom were required to answer the question whether they really intended to contract matrimony by ‘a loud and distinct “yes”.’ Thereupon the Governor pronounced them to be ‘husbands together,’ which very nearly upset my gravity. He was translating as he went along. After the business was over, we were invited into the piazza, and the Governor brought out champagne to drink their healths.

“When our boat had started out for the marriage, the German House hoisted all their flags, an example which all the other traders followed, so that as we returned the river was gay with bunting, and all the flags were dipped in salute, before being taken down. I thought this very nice. Great interest was being shown in consequence of this being the first marriage of a white man in the river. The Germans were specially pleased that it was solemnised by

German law. In coming back we had our single misfortune. One of the Kroo-boys who was carrying Mrs. Lyall slipped and dropped her into the water. Happily she took no harm, and only had to change her clothes and iron out her dress. Dr. Allen came to tea. Later we all went into the big house, and after supper and a chat Mrs. Lyall and I came back, leaving the bride in her new home. John Pinnock had to start for Victoria in the afternoon.

“Mrs. Lewis is so jolly and nice, I wish you had seen her. Mrs. Lyall returned to Calabar on Monday. She was much pleased with the Mission here and enjoyed her stay greatly. She said that prior to coming here she had not had a laugh since she came to Africa. She had plenty here, for we are a very merry party, I assure you. Since the wedding, we have settled down. I began school again on Tuesday. Last week we gave holiday in honour of the great event. Things are very happy here now, and we are just like one family. I go into the next house for dinner, and we always have tea together, taking turns. I am so glad Mrs. Lewis is so nice, for Mr. Lewis and I are exactly like brother and sister, and now I seem to have a sister, too. I have been wonderfully fortunate in having such kind friends, so that really I never feel lonely. . . . Two of my girls have gone to Mrs. Lewis. I have taken two new ones, and another is to come on Saturday. I really cannot take any more, as that will make fourteen. I wish I had a bigger house and room for a lot more. Many are begging to come. I was so glad to hear of you all from Tom Comber,

but so sorry to hear that dear Mr. Tucker has lost his wife. He will miss her dreadfully. They always seemed so fond of each other. I think I must finish up now, with heaps of love to Lily, Alice, Mr. Hartland and yourself, from

“Yours lovingly,

“GWEN.”

Before the honeymoon was over the young bride had passed on to the Father's house, with its many mansions, and its prepared place.

On October 27th Miss Thomas wrote again to Mrs. Hartland: “This letter I mean for my sister as well. I cannot write all I wish to say twice over. I hardly know how to tell you the news, it is so sad, so sudden, so unexpected. Dear Mrs. Lewis has gone to a better home than that which we had prepared for her. She passed away at about 5 p.m. this day week, Tuesday, 20th. I told you in my last letter how bright and merry she was, and how pleased with everything. We were so happy all together, just like one family. Breakfast was the only meal we took separately. I was as a sister to them in everything, and we were making plans for future work, so that we might not be separated. But as Grenfell said about dear John, ‘man proposes, but God disposes,’ and His ways are not our ways. Janie seemed so suitable to be a missionary's wife, and was just getting into our African ways, beginning to understand the children in the house, taking a class in the Sunday School, coming to school once in the week with me, and helping me with the sewing at home.

“On Saturday, 17th, we went up the river to Jibarri with Mr. Lewis and Dibundu, who, after examining six candidates, baptized them in the river. We then sat down to the Lord's Supper together. I do not think I ever enjoyed that solemn service more, although it was conducted in Dualla. It was so simple. There were only twenty-six present, in all; no communion plate, but just the common things we had with us. It was indeed a happy, holy time. And that was the last meal we took together.

“When we returned home I went to get tea, and coming back in a few minutes found Mrs. Lewis in fever. Of course I took her into her own house at once, and put her to bed in blankets; and from that time, until she died, she was never left without her husband or me. On Sunday her temperature fell to 101°, but rose later, and we could not bring it down again. . . . Still we were not alarmed, for the first fever is often very severe, as my own experience had proved. She had a bad night on Monday, and spoke then about dying, but on Tuesday morning seemed better. About 1 p.m. John Pinnock arrived unexpectedly from Victoria. She was so pleased to see him, and after talking a little said she thought she could sleep if we would all leave her, which we did. But very soon she felt the fever coming on again, and called her husband, and he put her into blankets. After dinner I went to sit with her, and about half-past three she said: ‘Gwen, I wish you would call Tom.’ I started to do so, but came back and said: ‘Are you getting low-hearted?’ She said: ‘No, but I don't think I shall get over this, do you?’ I told

her that I really thought she might, but would let her know if I came to think otherwise. Whereupon she said: 'Very well, I won't worry Tom by telling him.' However, I took her temperature, and finding it to be 106·8°, I called Mr. Lewis, and told him what she had said. I then went to get her a cup of tea, and left them together.

"After my return she said: 'I should have liked to live for your sake, Tom, and for mother and Katie, but I am not afraid and shall be happier *there*.' She also said: 'You will give Gwen my wedding brooch, won't you?' Soon after she became delirious, but still recognised us, turning from one to the other, and calling us by name. Just then Dr. Allen came to the beach, and she fell into a kind of coma, but while I had gone to meet him she roused again and said a few precious words to her husband. When we came into the room she was quite unconscious. Everything possible was done, but all was unavailing, and she passed away at five o'clock. Dr. Allen, who was very kind and attentive, says he never knew of such a case before. . . . She was very anxious that the friends at home should know that she had been so happy, and never regretted coming to Africa.

"We buried her the next morning, John Pinnock officiating, as he had done at the wedding three weeks earlier. His coming was providential. I think he was sent, for there was nothing very special to bring him, and his presence was a great comfort just then. We put the orange-blossoms in her coffin, and made a wreath from our garden. Afterwards, one of the German traders sent a

beautiful wreath for the grave. We had a simple service in the chapel, which began with the singing of "Rock of Ages." Then John read parts of 1 Cor. xv., and Rev. vii., and offered prayer. After this the first class schoolboys carried her to the grave, and we sang, 'Hear what the voice from heaven proclaims.' Then John concluded with prayer, and we left her to rest beside Mrs. Buckenham.

"It all seems like a dream. Her poor husband ! It is terrible for him, but he bears it so bravely and patiently. I never knew any one else so patient. I am very thankful to have been here. We have been packing some of her things to send home. Many of her presents had been scarcely looked at, and most of her dresses were never worn. I feel so for her friends at home. This is the second child they have lost abroad, and she was very anxious about her mother's health. I know how you will all sympathise with them and with us here. It has brought back so vividly to me all the sad time when dear John died. . . . I had grown so fond of her, and she was so kind to me. She brought me a beautiful little present, always called Mr. Lewis my brother ; and however much we had been together in the daytime, they never failed to walk in about eight o'clock, saying, 'We have come to say good-night to our sister.' You will understand what a blow this has been to me, yet I am thankful to be keeping so well.

"I can't think what they are going to do about sending some one to relieve us. Mr. Silvey does not mention returning, and Mr. Fuller says he sees

no hope of it yet. Mr. Lewis will have been out three years in February, and has written saying he wishes to go home ; and although I am anxious to remain as long as possible, I do not think it would be wise to stay too long, as I have had so many shocks since I came. Do not be too anxious about me, dears. I really take every care, and try to do my work quietly, having quite given up the rushing-about system, and in spite of everything am happy and content. I know you will pray for us that we may be strengthened and helped in the work here, and for poor Mr. Lewis that God may continue to help and comfort him."

CHAPTER V

RETURN, MARRIAGE, AND JOURNEY TO CONGO. 1885-1887

NO woman could pass through such experiences as had befallen Miss Thomas in Africa without incurring physical and mental strain which would render a prolonged stay perilous to life. Her recall was wisely determined upon, and in the middle of November she wrote to Mrs. Hartland of her return as decreed and imminent. On January 12, 1886, Mrs. Hartland wrote to Mr. Baynes requesting to be informed of the date of Miss Thomas's arrival. Mr. Baynes was absent in Liverpool, but immediately upon his return replied that he had made inquiries of the secretary of the African Mail Company, and learned that the *Ambriz* had been telegraphed from Madeira, "All well," but would not be in Liverpool for another week. Mr. Baynes also acknowledged the receipt of a letter from Mr. Lewis, enclosed by Mrs. Hartland, conveying the sad news of the death of Mrs. Wright Hay (formerly Miss Comber), following the birth of her child. It was the first intimation which had reached the Mission House, and Mr. Baynes says: "My colleague, Mr. Myers,

communicated the sad intelligence to Mr. Comber within an hour of the receipt of your letter." He adds: "May the Lord comfort and sustain Mr. Hay, and the sorrow-stricken family at home."

Upon her return to England Miss Thomas commenced to keep a diary, as thousands of other young women have done at certain interesting periods of their lives. The note of distinction in her case is, that she continued to do what she had resolved to do. So it comes to pass that I have nearly a score of volumes of her journals about me as I write. The diary commences with the following entry:—

"Sunday, January 24th.—Arrived at Liverpool. Came to London by 11.30 train. Got to Hartland's about five o'clock. Stayed all night. Had bilious attack. E. Jane [her sister, Mrs. Percival] and the children came to see me. They all look well."

The first entry is typical, and for a year or two the diary amounts to no more than the barest indication of daily engagements. Sometimes the record is a single word, as, for instance, "Indoors." Indeed, there were many days upon which the "awful cold" of the London winter made going out impracticable for one who had just come from the tropics. In later years the little pocket diary was succeeded by a bulkier volume, and the account of the day's proceedings was more extended.

It was at this time that I became acquainted with Miss Thomas, and the reader will appreciate the touch of anxiety with which I turned to the next Sunday's record, expecting to find some hint of her impressions of the new minister. For it was only two months earlier that I had succeeded

the Rev. Francis Tucker, whom she loved so well, in the pastorate of Camden Road Church. Our friendship grew with the years, but I am grateful to know that my friend thought kindly of me from the first.

“Sunday, January 31st.—Went to Camden in the morning. Heard Mr. Hawker. Like him very much. Emma came in the afternoon, and Alice H. [Hartland] came to supper.”

Mrs. Percival's residence, in which Miss Thomas found her temporary home, was but little distant from the church, and she attended many meetings and paid and received many visits, in which former associations were renewed and old friendships deepened. At an early date Miss Saker called and remained until the next day. The journal credibly relates that the writer and her guest “kept awake talking for long time.” In March Miss Thomas received a proposal of marriage, by letter. Her answer, declining it, was written on the morrow. During the spring and summer she frequently visited at her uncle's house in Harrow, and once or twice made a lengthened stay. In April she went to Haverfordwest, to be the dear and welcome guest of Mr. and Mrs. Phillips, the parents of the late Mrs. Lewis; and while she was there Mr. Lewis arrived. The happiness of her visit to Wales was marred by illness. Both guests suffered from serious attacks of African fever, but were tenderly cared for by the friends of the girl-bride, whose passing away had involved them all in one great common sorrow. For Miss Thomas the visit lasted three weeks.

Thereafter the references to Mr. Lewis in the

journal are more frequent. For some time, and throughout the May Meetings, which the two friends attended with keen interest, Mr. Lewis remains "Mr. Lewis." But before "the merrie month" is over the entries give a hint of new conditions, as significant as the change of pronouns in the Acts of the Apostles. On Sunday night Miss Thomas attends Camden Road Church accompanied by "Mr. Lewis." On Monday morning she meets "Tom" at the Mission House, and thereafter "Mr. Lewis" is dropped in favour of "Tom." If Mr. Lewis were in London instead of in Kimpese, I should endeavour to persuade him to aid me in increasing the interest of this page. As it is, I am constrained to depend upon the diary, and turning over the pages I find the following pertinent records:—

"Sunday, July 4th.—Went to chapel twice. Communion in the evening. Stayed at Hartlands'. Told them about Tom and me."

"Sunday, July 25th.—Went to the parish church [Harrow] in the morning. Bishop of G—— preached. Very poor sermon. Katie and Dora came to tea. I told them of my engagement."

"Tuesday, August 10th.—Tom saw Mr. Baynes. So glad he approves."

Early in the year Miss Thomas arranged for a short course of practical study at the Zenana Medical Home (or College) in St. George's, E., of which Dr. Griffiths was principal. She went into residence in May, sharing a room with Miss Saker, and on Tuesday, May 25th, reported attending her first case. Her engagements at the Home permitted considerable freedom of movement, and

she continued to visit friends and attend services at Camden Road, Spurgeon's Tabernacle, and elsewhere.

Affectionate solicitude for her friend Mrs. Seymour occupied much of her time and involved many journeys across London. Mr. Seymour's health had been broken for some years, and in the middle of May he died. His wife's case was rendered the more pathetic by the fact that she was shortly expecting the birth of her third child. Miss Thomas was with her friend when this event occurred, some six weeks later, and it is not surprising that an early friendship, deepened by this passage through the Vale of Tears, held to the end. Miss Thomas's letters to Mrs. Seymour—who, later, became Mrs. W. C. Parkinson—would alone have supplied ample material for a biography.

The engagement to Mr. Lewis gave the greatest satisfaction to many of her friends, and the late summer brought happy relaxations, including a stay at Deal. The Autumn Meetings of the Baptist Missionary Society were held in Bristol, and Miss Thomas and Mr. Lewis were required to be present, that, with other outgoing missionaries, they might have part in the valedictory service. For by this time it had been arranged that after their marriage Mr. Lewis and his bride would proceed to the Congo. In a letter written to Miss Lily Hartland from York, where she was paying a visit to her cousin, Miss Thomas gives a lively account of her Bristol experiences, and the story of her first day may be quoted:—

“We arrived at noon on Tuesday, went straight to Broadmead Chapel, left our luggage in the

cloak-room there, and thence proceeded to get some dinner, meeting a good many Welsh friends on the way. As the afternoon sermon was to be preached in Tyndale Chapel, we set out to find it. Bristol is built on seven hills. One of these, Clifton, seems to be the 'swell' part of the town, and we found that Tyndale Chapel (Mr. Glover's) is at the top of it. We got there long before the time of service, sat down against the railings, and studied the map to discover the whereabouts of our respective places of abode. Happily they were both fairly near, but a long way from Broadmead, where our luggage was left. While waiting outside, we met Mr. Phillips, who was very glad to see us, and came in with us to the service. The sermon, by Mr. Oswald Dykes, was very good; but I was rather too sleepy to appreciate it duly, for the chapel was packed to excess; pouring rain came on in the middle, and it became so dark that the gas had to be lighted. Mr. Ross sat in the same pew with us, and on coming out introduced me to his wife, whom we met several times after; she does seem nice.

"Outside, our problem was how to meet Mrs. Robinson. I heard afterwards that Mr. Baynes was shouting for me from the platform; but he was too late. However, we met Mr. Brown, who undertook to be my guide, while Tom raced down to send up the luggage. We met Mrs. Robinson with Mrs. Frank Smith just outside the house. The Robinsons are such nice people, evidently rich, but so very kind and friendly.

"After tea we drove down to the Colston Hall. Rain was still pouring. As Mr. Baynes wished me

to sit on the platform, I had to go to the Committee-room. Being the only lady, I felt rather odd, especially as we filed on to the platform in Exeter Hall style. Colston Hall is an immense place, and was crowded as tight as could be. You will read the speeches, so that I need not report them. The meeting was most solemn, most of all Dr. MacLaren's address, which I shall never forget. I was so thankful that, though I was tired, for the day had been a very long and exciting one, I was quite well and had no headache."

The valedictory meetings of the Baptist Missionary Society have long been remarkable for their impressiveness. The meeting at Bristol remains among the most remarkable. I was present, and have no doubt that its influence would count as a constant inspiration in the lives of the departing missionaries. The valedictory address, delivered by Dr. Maclaren, which Mrs. Lewis affirmed that she would never forget, was a great utterance. The speaker had reached, but had not passed, the zenith of his powers. The occasion appealed to him, and commanded all the resources of his genius and intensity. One sentence only I could quote from memory: "If you want to drive a pointed piece of iron through a thick board, the surest way to do it is to heat your skewer." The pronunciation of the word "skewer" was as extraordinary as the choice of it, and half achieved the miracle of changing a mere vocable into a thing of iron, pointed and red-hot.

I have read over again the printed report of the

address, and have felt over again the thrilling force imparted to its periods by "the sound of a voice that is still." The points were: "Have ever clear before you the ultimate object of your work"; "Be enthusiasts"; "Cherish a boundless hope in the possibilities of your work"; "Live in close communion with your Lord." The hearing of such an address in an emotional hour is a biographical incident of first-rate importance, and I hold that I shall be minding my own business in reproducing its opening and closing passages.

"Dear Brethren and Sisters, you are here this evening probably never to meet again till you give an account of your stewardship. A momentary association in this hall will be followed by a wide separation to strangely different conditions of work. As Rome's eagles parted at the city gates to march east, west, north, and south, pushing forward in every quarter the boundaries of the Empire, you go forth to bear the dove of peace farther than Rome's eagles ever flew. . . .

"And now, dear friends, the languages of many nations have different forms of leave-taking. We would say to you with the Hebrew, 'Peace be unto you,' the peace of conscious communion, the calm of a quiet heart, the rest of faith, the tranquillity of submission, be ever yours. We would say with the Greek, 'Rejoice' with the joy which may blossom amidst sorrow, like the blue and delicate flowers which blossom on the very edge of the glacier—the joy which Christ Himself has connected with keeping His commandments, and abiding in His love, the joy of the Lord into which faithful followers even here may enter. We would

say with the Roman, 'Be strong,' strong with the strength of those who wait upon God, and, therefore, mount up with wings as eagles in contemplation, who can run without weariness in occasional spurts of severe effort, and can walk without fainting along the monotonous dusty road of petty duties. We would say in our own familiar English, only venturing to put it in its enlarged and proper form, 'God be with you!' May He, whose presence makes the solitary place glad as with a sudden burst of light, be always with you. May He be with you for your wisdom and your success, for your shield and exceeding great reward. We wish you peace, joy, strength. But our highest wish is that which includes them and a whole universe besides: Farewell, and God be with you."

Mr. Lewis and Miss Thomas were married in Camden Road Baptist Church, on Wednesday, December 1, immediately prior to the opening of the Annual Congo Sale. Under normal circumstances the Sale, which is something of a festival, would have added brightness to the wedding. But the sky was overclouded for Sale and wedding. It had been arranged, most naturally and happily, that the ceremony should be performed by the Rev. Francis Tucker, who had been the bride's minister from her childhood, and whom she regarded with reverent and filial affection. But when the wedding-day came his eloquent lips had been touched by the great silence, and two days later his coffin was carried down the aisle of the church in which he had ministered for twenty-

seven years, on its way to the grave. So it fell to my lot to conduct the marriage service. Of course if I had known that twenty-four years later I should be writing the biography of the bride, I should now be able to supply a reasonably interesting account of an hour so momentous in the life of my friend. I could not know. I have been told that she was married from the house of her sister, Mrs. Percival, but all that I can recall unaided is, that she was "given away" by the Rev. John Jenkyn Brown, of Birmingham, and that Mr. Lewis went away in my overcoat. His case was worse than mine; for whereas in his coat I had room and to spare, in mine he was in straitened circumstances. When he was again capable of observing matters so prosaic, he was prompt to repair the blunder. The consequences were not serious, but rather the reverse, for the humorous reminiscence has many times provoked laughter.

Perhaps it was well that the event should have one touch of humour, for the atmosphere was inevitably sombre. Conscious of my own poverty of remembrance, I consulted a friend who would be likely to help me. She looked up her diary and found the following: "Wedding; Congo Sale; 2.30. The most dismal wedding I was ever at." I forbore further quest of detail, and make haste to say that if the wedding was "dismal" the union which it celebrated was one of rare and radiant happiness which remained unclouded till its earthly close.

The first two months of 1887 were busy with meetings, journeys, including a tour in South Wales, and the usual necessary preparations for

a long stay abroad. On Thursday, March 3rd, a farewell meeting was held in Camden Road Church, and on the following Wednesday, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis sailed from Liverpool for the Congo, their particular station being as yet undetermined.

At Old Calabar they found to their great regret that they had just missed meeting Mr. and Mrs. Grenfell, who had passed them in the ss. *Nubia*, homeward bound. Victoria, and Bethel, Cameroons, were also visited. Early in May, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis reached Underhill and learned that they were to work in San Salvador. Mrs. Lewis was disappointed in her first impressions of the Congo, the aspect of the country being oppressively barren after the luxuriance of the Cameroons. She and her husband were also saddened by news of more deaths. But they were eager for their work, and on May 10th started inland for San Salvador. The remainder of this chapter will be occupied with Mrs. Lewis's diary of the journey.

"Tuesday, May 10, 1887.—We started from Underhill Station at 2.30. Our men were sent on before to a town called Vunda, where they were to pitch the tent for the night. The caravan consisted of thirty-five carriers—eight for my hammock, six for the hammock used in turn by Mr. Phillips and Mr. Lewis, and the rest for loads—Malevo, who was our interpreter, Mpombolo, who was our cook, two personal boys, my Cameroon girl Marian, and ourselves. Mr. Scrivener took us in a boat to Noki, where we disembarked. I got into my hammock and the others followed on foot.

We soon reached the bottom of a steep hill, where Mr. Scrivener said goodbye, and returned. It was dreadful work for the hammock-bearers to get up this hill. Most of the time I was nearly perpendicular. They stumbled once but did not let me down. The country here is a succession of steep and barren hills.

“We arrived at Vunda about six o'clock, just as it was getting dark. Here we met another caravan from San Salvador with letters from Messrs. Weeks and Graham, reporting all well and welcoming us. The Underhill boys were sent back, and we went on with those from San Salvador. After prayers, we retired to bed at eight o'clock. The mosquitoes were very bad. Mr. Phillips slept in a native house.

“Wednesday, 11th.—We got up at four-thirty and had breakfast in our tent by candle light. The morning was very damp, but as I was wrapped up for the journey in a waterproof sheet and had a waterproof rug for awning, I did not get wet. It amuses the people very much to see Mr. Lewis lift me into the hammock. The carriers object to stooping, so I am lifted in and tucked up in rug and rainsheet. Soon after starting we encountered a very steep hill, but as the path was wide, I was carried up comfortably sideways. On our way we passed a market where the people all screamed out on seeing me, ‘Mundele ankento’ (a white woman), and were delighted when I pulled back the awning and looked out. We reached our next camping-place, a little town with a big name, Kingonde a miezi, about 10 a.m. Here also I was an object of interest and wonder, as Mrs. Weeks was the only

white woman they had ever seen before, and she was very ill as she passed through on her way home.

Thursday, 12th.—We started early. The road to-day is much smoother, and now and then we come upon pretty patches of tropical vegetation. We have seen a great number of brilliant birds, red, with black rings about their necks. The road being smoother, the carriers took me along at a brisk run, and I suffered a severe shaking up. They make the most fearful noises when running, to keep up their spirits. About 10.30 we came to a large plateau where we were to camp for the day. There were few trees, and it reminded me of Hampstead Heath, only it was flat. We managed to find one tree which afforded a little shade, and sat under it until the others came up. Mr. Phillips was suffering with a touch of fever, and had his travelling bed set up until the tents were ready. We have Mr. Weeks' tent which is a large one, with a small room behind in which Marian sleeps. It was dreadfully hot all day, and we were glad to retire to our tents. In some respects it is pleasanter to camp out than to stay in a town. One is tired after a journey and does not desire to be stared at for the remainder of the day.

“Friday, 13th.—Last night we were much disturbed by the carriers, who, having no other shelter, got under the fly of our tent, and spent the greater part of the night in telling Congo tales. After very little sleep, we rose and had breakfast by moonlight. Mr. Phillips, still feeling poorly, took the hammock most of the

way. We crossed one or two small streams and passed through some splendid scenery. A tree covered with bright scarlet blossoms, and some magnificent boulders, balanced one on another, specially attracted my attention.

"About 9 a.m. we came to a place where some women appeared with 'chop,' ready cooked, for sale. Although we wanted very much to get on the men insisted on buying; so we got out of our hammocks and sat on a rock while they took their refreshment. After making another start we reached Lombo town. There the hammock men made a stand, determined to wait for Mr. Lewis. At this place a kind of play is performed by which it is hoped to frighten strangers. Men called 'Nkimba,' smeared all over with white stuff, and wearing petticoats of grass, rush out, make whirring noises, and screech horribly. However, seeing two white men, they did not come very near to us."

"About 11 a.m. we halted at Kiunga, a small, wretched place where the people were exceedingly troublesome. It was some time before the tent men arrived, and we had to sit under the eaves of a native house and take our 'chop.' Having a severe headache, Mr. Phillips retired into the native house in which he was to sleep, and lay down to rest. Mr. Lewis fell asleep in his chair. In the meantime the chief, who was absent when we arrived, returned. Seeing us he ran up, shook hands with me, and having shaken up Mr. Lewis went into the house, and in spite of the boys' protest insisted upon waking Mr. Phillips. After this he brought us some palm wine. It was

refreshing, but I do not care for it. Later, having fallen asleep, I was rudely awakened by some one shaking me, and shrieking something in Portuguese. It was another man who had just come home and was decidedly the worse for drink. Of course, I had to smile and shake hands with him. Mr. Lewis had retired to our tent. I followed him, but both he and Mr. Phillips had to submit to the same process. We were all very tired, and it was very hot, but there was no rest for us that afternoon. We were just beginning to enjoy a little quiet, when a number of men appeared at the tent door, gesticulating and talking loudly, several of them having obviously had too much to drink. They spoke Portuguese, and upon sending for Lembwa we found they were insisting that we should give them gin. It was long before we could be rid of them. At tea-time they returned clamouring for sugar. As we were short of that article, we put them off by allowing them to have a drink of tea all round, which not being sweet they did not like. We were glad when the time came for bed, though even there we had little rest, for the mosquitoes were dreadful in spite of curtains.

“Saturday, 14th.—We started early, as usual, and left Kiunga without regret. Hence to San Salvador the track runs mostly through long grass. It is from twelve to twenty feet high, and so thick and strong that the carriers had hard work to pull the hammock through. In the early mornings the dews were so heavy that the water was running off the hammock-pole, and Mr. Lewis and Mr. Phillips were wet to the skin. We

reached Kongo dia Ntinu about 10.30. I arrived some time before the others, alighted from the hammock, and sat on the cushions in the shade of a house. Here the people did not venture near me at first, but sat at a respectful distance, staring with all their might. When our 'chop' box arrived we found, on opening it, that the bottle containing butter had been broken, and that consequently everything was bathed in oil. We managed to save a little, but must needs take everything out, as milk, tea-leaves, butter, and salt were well mixed together. A man here brought a queer little animal for sale. It was quite tame and the boys declared it would make good 'chop.' After some discussion, we decided that it was an ant-eater. Mr. Phillips bought it as a pet, but since our arrival at San Salvador it has disappeared. Kongo dia Ntinu is a clean town, and a nice native house was placed at our service, which we found much cooler than the tent in the afternoon. While walking in the town we came upon some splendid lime trees growing wild and laden with fruit; also some guava trees. We refreshed ourselves from the latter, and gathered a lot of limes to take with us. I should have mentioned that our new pet received the honoured name of 'Jeremiah.'

"Sunday, 15th.—It was not considered advisable to make a halt on Sunday, so we started as usual. The height of the grass made it impossible for my carriers to turn, so I was carried up hills with head where my feet ought to be, a posture which was not productive of pleasant sensations. At the foot of one hill I had to alight to cross a small

stream, and as I happened to be ahead of the others I did not relish the prospect of getting in again on the slope of such a steep hill, so I ventured to walk up with the assistance of Lembwa's climbing-stick. But my husband and Mr. Phillips shook their heads so gravely over my imprudence that I did not dare to repeat the exploit.

"To-day we crossed a river called the Lusu, which is bridged by a few branches of trees, twisted and tied together. It was rather awkward, but we took off our boots and got over safely. On this side we were detained for some time by a long palaver about paying toll for the use of the bridge. When this was settled the chief 'dashed' us a goat, for which we returned about twice its value in cloth. We then resumed our journey. At most of the towns they 'dashed' us fowls, and sometimes one of the women would bring me something special. Just before arriving at Mongo Kongo, where we camped to-day, we had to cross a small stream, in doing which Mr. Lewis sat down in the middle, and was carried into camp in a sopping condition, as his boots were off and shared the immersion. He had to sit, minus some of his garments, wrapped up in a rug in a native house till the man arrived with his bag. We passed through some lovely bits of forest to-day, but the greater part is not what we understand by 'tropical.'

"At Mongo Kongo we met a man from San Salvador, bearing a letter from Mr. Graham, begging Mr. Phillips to come on quickly as Mr. Weeks was very ill. So about 3 p.m. he started

off taking the hammock, his personal boys, and one or two men with bed and 'chop' loads; also 'Jeremiah,' leaving us to follow with Lembwa. Shortly after his departure a number of people came and knelt down before our tent desiring to know why rain had not come. It was difficult to make them understand that we were not responsible, and as rain came plentifully the next night I fear we had the credit of the boon.

"Monday, 16th.—On the way to-day we met some women coming to a small market who stopped the hammock bearers and insisted on looking at me. So I got down and submitted to inspection. They all crowded around me, shaking hands in turn, and two of them presented me with a few pieces of sugar-cane. . . . It was rather late when we reached Nkiendi our next halting-place, and shortly after the tent was up a storm came on which lasted about an hour.

"Tuesday, 17th.—After a wild night with mosquitoes, in the early morning the storm returned with increased violence and continued until six o'clock, so that we could not start till late. We soon reached the Lunda River, where we were long delayed. The river is crossed by a curious suspension bridge, which the natives have constructed of twisted and plaited branches of trees. It is hung from two trees which are slightly bent, and the getting up is a somewhat awkward proceeding, as is also the getting down. We had to climb and walk very carefully. The Loangos declined to take their loads across. After a lot of palavering, the loads were undone and the Congo men carried them over. It was getting late when the crossing

was completed, but fortunately the sun was not hot, and we were able to go on in comfort. We passed several small rivers, and one larger one, the Lele, which was much swollen after the rain. Here we had trouble again with the carriers. They declared they could not take me over in the hammock, and had no idea of carrying without it, except in their own way of carrying gentlemen. So we were in a fix, as the water was too deep to permit me to attempt wading. Mr. Lewis was just going to carry me himself, when two of them at last consented to return with the hammock and take me over. We were very glad of this; for the river-beds are full of big stones, and we might both have had a dip together. At one place we noticed a very curious and picturesque formation of rock which assumed the appearance of a door cut in the hill. We stopped at a town called Kimvangi, and here the chief gave us a little goat, which was killed in the evening. After a short rest, we went on for about three-quarters of an hour to Lubamba, where we stayed the night.

“Wednesday, 18th.—We rose very early to-day and started at 6 a.m. sharp. The hills in this region are steep and frequent, and we were continually going up and down. In one place we went down into a very deep ravine. The descent was so steep that, after making several attempts, the carriers found themselves unable to take me down in the hammock; so I had to get out and walk, for which I was not sorry. The way was very slippery and foothold difficult to keep, but with the aid of Lembwa and his stick I got safely to the bottom. After comfortably crossing several small rivers we

reached Mbanza Ngozela before 11 o'clock. Here we rested, and after taking some refreshment, pushed on again, as it was a dull day and we were anxious to reach San Salvador. The road was not at all monotonous now, ascending a place as awkward as the roof of a house, then forming a narrow path along the edge of a precipice which made me quite giddy. There are some magnificent rocks hereabout. Leaving this region of rocks, we traverse a wide valley and ascend a small hill to San Salvador, which lies on high ground, where baobab-trees grow in abundance. As we neared Kongo (San Salvador) many women came from their farms to speak to me. We arrived at the Mission House about 1 p.m. The boys, arrayed in clean shirts, came running out to meet us, followed by Messrs. Phillips and Graham, who gave us a hearty welcome, as also did Mr. Weeks who was getting better."

CHAPTER VI

FIRST TERM AT SAN SALVADOR. 1887-1890

THE commencement of Mrs. Lewis's work at San Salvador was mercifully tame in comparison with her adventurous beginnings at Cameroons. The Mission was fairly established. There was a serviceable chapel, attended by a large congregation. Work among the men and boys was well organised, and gave promise of early harvest. Unhappily, almost immediately after the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, Mr. Weeks, the senior missionary of the station, was compelled to return home. He had remained to the last limits of endurance, and his condition gave rise to grave fears. By the mercy of God he is still fulfilling a distinguished ministry in the service of the Mission. In Messrs. Phillips and Graham, their remaining colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis found fellow-workers, much to their mind, and the friendships formed in those far back days have known no interruption but that of death. On Friday, December 4, 1887, five candidates whose lives and testimony yielded adequate evidence of their conversion to God, were baptized by Mr. Lewis, and on the following Sunday a Church was formed. The

next day Mr. Graham wrote a happy letter to Mr. Baynes, containing the following passage :—

“The names of these five you will doubtless know. They are: Matoko, who was one of the first of Mr. Comber’s friends here; Dom Miguel, the blacksmith; the other three are our own boys—Kivitidi, who was at first Mr. Hartland’s boy; Nlekai, whom many of the friends will remember seeing with Mr. Weeks in England; and Luzemba, who came up from Tunduwa to visit his family here.

“The baptismal service was very impressive. Quite a large number of people gathered to witness the ordinance, and both candidates and on-lookers behaved exceedingly well.

“We all felt it to be a great joy yesterday evening to sit down at the Lord’s Table for the first time with native Christians in Congo.

“It seems rather strange that it was just twelve months on Saturday since Mr. Phillips and I came to San Salvador. We could scarcely have hoped that in one year we should enjoy the privilege we had yesterday.

“As we intended to organise a Church, we called together these five, who were to be its first members, a little earlier than our usual time for the Communion Service, that we might explain matters to them. Mr. Phillips told them the nature and some of the principal laws of the Church of Christ, after which we each gave them the right hand of Christian fellowship. As it was my turn to preside at the Communion, I said a few words on the nature of the ordinance before we proceeded to the observance of it. It was indeed a season of hallowed joy.”

As yet there were no women converts. But from the first Mrs. Lewis realised that she was specially called to be the teacher and evangelist of the women and girls of San Salvador. Her efforts secured quick and encouraging response. Some three months after her arrival the Rev. H. Ross Phillips reports: "Here, at San Salvador, Mrs. Lewis has already gathered a fine class of girls, and a women's class also. Great interest is being shown by the women in the new work, and evidently it is much appreciated." It may be useful to the reader if at this point I reproduce one or two paragraphs written shortly after Mrs. Lewis's death. They anticipate the story, but present an outline picture, details of which this and following chapters will supply:—

"The chapel, which also served as school, was a bamboo structure capable of seating some 250 persons. It was well attended on Sundays, men sitting in front and women behind; the women often chattering and inattentive, accounting it 'a men's palaver.' One day, soon after her arrival, a woman came to Mrs. Lewis, saying that she imperfectly understood the teaching in the chapel, and begged that she might come and be taught privately. She was, of course, encouraged. The next week two or three others came with her, and so began Mrs. Lewis's women's meeting, which, with its developments, has ever since been one of the most important parts of the work at San Salvador. It was all to the good that the first inquirers were women of some distinction—indeed, wives of the King. Their example encouraged others. Very wisely Mrs. Lewis

determined that these meetings should be as informal as possible. The teaching was conducted in conversational fashion. Questions were welcomed and comments solicited. The meetings were held by Mrs. Lewis in her dining-room, the women sitting on the floor, and when the dining-room could not hold them they overflowed into the verandah. Sometimes there were as many as fifty present. But again, wisely, Mrs. Lewis preferred, for her special work, the small class to the large congregation. She could get closer to ten women than to a hundred, and so her inquirers and converts were divided up into many classes, held on different days. As the work developed, and the surrounding districts were reached, the women of each district had their day, and by these means our friend became the teacher, the friend, the confidante of hundreds of African women, who understood something of the love of God as it came to them through her heart.

"While she was acquiring the language her work was done through an interpreter; an intelligent, good lad, who followed her about with absolute devotion and was always at her service. The first converts were men. But a few months after Mrs. Lewis's arrival at San Salvador two of the King's wives were baptized, and now for long years there have been more women members than men in the Church at San Salvador. In addition to her women's classes, Mrs. Lewis conducted, with great success, a large school of girls held in the chapel.

"I am indebted to Mr. Lewis for a time-table of his wife's day's work at San Salvador. She rose

at 7, breakfasted at 7.30, concerned herself with domestic matters until 9, when the morning service of prayer was held. At 9.30 she dispensed medicines to sick folk, and then came classes for women, which lasted till one o'clock, the dinner hour, followed by an hour's rest and tea. From 3 to 5 the school occupied her. Once or twice in the week there was a woman's prayer-meeting from 5 to 6, and the evening hours were filled with domestic duties, writing, and study. A big day's work for Africa."

By a happy coincidence, on the morning of the day which I had set apart for the composition of this chapter, the post brought me a letter from Mrs. Graham of San Salvador. I quote certain apposite sentences. Mrs. Graham had been asking some of the elder women to give account of their earliest remembrances of Mrs. Lewis. "They say that when she came they had got used to white people, and were not afraid of her, but none of the women had come out from heathenism. Her teaching was so convincing, and she so unwearying in her efforts to get hold of them, that they never once doubted the truth of her message, even when threatened with death by the King. Some of these women are still among our most consistent members, and to this day we are reaping the fruit of the thorough training in elementary theology which they received from her. She loved teaching, was devoted to the women and girls, and we learnt from her wise plans of work."

Upon arrival at San Salvador, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis took up their residence in the grass-house, which was available—a good enough house of its kind,

but leaving much to be desired both as to comfort and accommodation. Mr. Lewis, like his friend George Grenfell, was a practical man, who had been taught to work in iron, and knew, half by instinct, how to work in wood and stone. Immediately he set himself to build a more solid, spacious home for his wife, and on November 5, 1887, this important addition to the Mission properties in San Salvador was completed, and Mrs. Lewis proudly took possession of a house which afforded better facilities for the ordered housekeeping and evangelical hospitality to which, by nature and by grace, she was inclined.

Mr. Lewis's "right-hand man" in this building business was his "boy" Kivitidi. And here some particulars concerning Kivitidi, who will often appear in the story, may be compendiously set down. He had been one of John Hartland's boys. From his much-loved and lamented master he had received the seeds of truth and book-learning, and good measure of instruction in manual work. From the first he became much attached to Mr. Lewis, and when he was informed that Mrs. Lewis had formerly been engaged to John Hartland, he said he "knew all about her," and thereafter was her devoted servant too. His regard was reciprocated, and his master and mistress were his truest friends.

Yet Mrs. Lewis finds it in her heart to laugh at him, a fact which is nowise to his discredit. For surely she never had a friend from whom her bright humorous spirit would not derive amusement as well as other and more momentous benefits. When the house was roof high, Kivitidi

had to work at an unwonted elevation, and Mrs. Lewis gives a quaint account of his obvious tremors. But when Mr. Phillips was about to be married in San Salvador, some months later, Kivitidi once more suffered tremors. His own matrimonial projects were ripening, and he requested that the Christian marriage service should be explained to him. Mrs. Lewis complied with his request. Whereupon he owned himself appalled at the thought of having "to promise all that in the presence of all the people." However, like many another of his sex, when the day came, he "screwed his courage to the sticking-point," and promised "all that."

Prior to his marriage, he built a house for himself, in the vicinity of his master's, so fine a house that it excited the dangerous envy of the King; for was it not the finest native house in Congo? Within a year of the building of his own house, Kivitidi was engaged in erecting a temporary mission chapel in Etoto, and became the first teacher of the first sub-station of our Congo Mission. Later, a son was born to him, whom he named "John Hartland," and it was one of the trials of the young mother, that she found her baby's name exceedingly difficult to pronounce. Probably she quickly discovered a manageable working substitute.

The young interpreter referred to above was Nlekai, who was devoted to Mrs. Lewis, her instructor in the native language, and her indispensable attendant in her labours among the women. Confessing her profound obligations to him, she yet yearned for the time when she would

be able to dispense with at least one important part of his service. This yearning is incidentally expressed in a letter written to Miss Hartland on January 25, 1888, a letter which exhibits her work among the women in process of evolution.

"The women's meeting on Monday is not well attended except by the elder girls. I have usually an attendance of from thirty to forty, but not more than two or three of the town women. I long so to be able to talk to them in their own language, though Nlekai does his best, and really takes an interest in making them understand. But many matters come up from time to time which it is awkward to speak about through a boy. Not that these women are particular, but it is bad for the boy. I have another class now, which I think will become regular. A few Sundays ago three or four of the King's wives, and several other women, came on Sunday afternoon, directly after dinner, saying, they wanted to hear more of God's palaver. This is my resting-time, but, of course, I could not send them away. They said they would like to come every Sunday at the same hour, and they have come several times. Two or three of them are, I believe, earnestly seeking the way of salvation. It is very hard for them to understand even the simplest truths. . . . I do feel for them! They are so surrounded by filth of every kind."

Kivitidi and Nlekai are spoken of as "boys." In truth they were young men; and as early as October, 1887, Mrs. Lewis has occasion to correct the mistaken impression which the designation "boys" has made upon the minds of certain of her friends. They have sent out shirts which are piti-

fully scant, and are implored to remember that the "boy" Kivitidi is as big as Mr. Lewis. Three months later she has to plead for bigger dresses for the "girls." Of the sixty "girls" in her school, two-and-twenty are married women, some of them with two or three children; and when the school examination is held the writing prize is taken by one of the King's wives.

The sympathetic appreciation which the "boys" received from the woman whom they all revered is indicated in the following luminous and discerning passage, which occurs in a letter written in November, 1888, to Mrs. Hartland:—

"I will give the boys the things as you say. Thank you very much for putting in something for Nlekai. He has no one in England who sends him things, and he is such a good boy; a real earnest Christian worker, who has been my greatest help all round. He spends two evenings with me every week, one helping me with Kongo¹ translation, while on Saturday he receives a Bible-lesson. We are going through the Epistles together, and I am also teaching him English at odd times. He is so very anxious to learn. He goes with me when I visit in the town, and until just now has done all my interpreting. Since Kivitidi's foot has been bad, Nlekai has been doing part of his work for him, and now that Kivitidi is resuming his work, I am going to take Elembe to translate for me on Sundays so as to set Nlekai free. During the last year and a half he has had a thorough drilling by means of interpreting and visiting, and we think he will make a first-rate

¹ See Note B (p. 345).

evangelist, though of a kind greatly different from Kivitidi. They are not in the least alike. Kivitidi has not the slightest fear of man, and for speaking to chiefs and big men, or addressing a congregation, he is far the better of the two. But Nlekai is our 'Barnabas,' and goes so nicely in and out of the houses and among women and sick people. Mr. Phillips is going to spare him one day from school, and he is to have a district to work twice a week. We pray that these two may have a great blessing and do much good. Matata, I think you know, is helping Nlekai with day school, and Mrs. Phillips with the language. So we hope that in time both he and Elembe will be able to work on their own account. Helping us is a capital training for them."

Though the work of Mrs. Lewis among the women of San Salvador prospered from the beginning, it was not without its vicissitudes, and she was not without her hours of depression. In a letter addressed to Mrs. J. Jenkyn Brown, dated May 15, 1888, she confesses that just before Christmas she was tempted to give up her Monday class for the town women, as on several occasions only one came. But at the time of writing she is able to report most encouraging progress. Her day school is increasing rapidly. From twenty to twenty-five of the town women attend the Monday class, besides a number of the school-girls who remain. "Then the women came of their own accord on Sunday afternoon to my house to hear more, and this has become a regular institution. On Fridays I have only the Church members, and on Saturdays any who are inquiring

the way of salvation. There are now five of the King's wives awaiting baptism, and several other women of whom I have great hopes. So you see we have much reason to rejoice in the blessing of God, and to take courage for the future. We might baptize many more, but we feel the need of great care. A little waiting will not hurt them, if they are sincere; and meanwhile we are able to watch their lives and instruct them further. It is so easy for these people to make a profession and to make long prayers. It is another thing for them to give up their bad country customs and to lead pure lives."

This letter will probably raise a question in the mind of the reader, which was raised in the mind of Mrs. Lewis's correspondent. Writing some months later to Mrs. Brown, she says, "I am not surprised that you should think it strange to hear of *some* of the wives of the King being baptized. But as far as the women are concerned, they cannot leave their husbands, if they would, and therefore this could hardly be made a condition of baptism or Church membership. As to the other side, it is a very vexed question, and I am not at all sure that the position we have taken up as a Mission is the best. But the matter was virtually settled before we came here. There are so many opinions upon the subject that it is difficult to say which is right, in the absence of any absolute command. Of course, we do not allow Church members to take any more wives than they have already, and those not married can only take one wife."

Having attempted to give the reader some general idea of Mrs. Lewis's work among women

during the earlier period of her labours in San Salvador, I proceed to make some rapid notes of events in due sequence culled from diaries and letters. In June, 1887, the missionaries took their modest part in the Imperial Jubilee rejoicings, though they mistook the date, and on June 6th instead of June 22nd, Mr. Lewis dipped the flag, and in the absence of big guns Mr. Phillips fired salutes with his revolver.

Little more than a month later the Mission was plunged into depths of sorrow by news which afflicted every Christian worker on the Congo, and sent a thrill of intense pain through thousands of Christian hearts at home. The diary records:—

“Saturday, July 16, 1887.—Had a very slight fever last night. While at school letters came telling of the death of Tom Comber. What can it all mean?

“Sunday, July 17th.—Had a very sorrowful and solemn Sunday. Mr. Phillips spoke in the morning, Tom in the afternoon.”

Mr. Comber had many friends, but none of them regarded him with more affectionate reverence than Gwen Lewis, and her remembrance of him was vivid, and tender, and sacred, until the day on which she died at sea, as he had died.

Many minor illnesses are recorded, and in a letter dated January 25, 1888, Mrs. Lewis remarks that her schoolgirls get holidays when she is sick, but none other. Even these are ill-esteemed, and the scholars are painfully eager for the resumption of their work.

In the same letter reference is made to a case of more than local interest. A man of some edu-

cation obtained an interview with Mr. Lewis, and expressed a wish that his wife, who was a scholar in the school, might be taught to obey her husband. Mr. Lewis stated that such obedience was taught as a general principle, but that a particular application of the principle could not be insisted upon until the nature of the case was known; for if a husband commanded his wife to do a bad thing she ought not to obey him. The applicant did not specify the trouble, but said he came, fearing that he might grow angry and beat her, and that she might carry tales about him. Later it was ascertained that he desired her to leave Mrs. Lewis and go to the priests' school. This desire was not fulfilled.

"Monday, April 23, 1888 (Diary).—A big palaver between the King and our Mission. He wants our people to build their houses in another part of the town. They are to answer to-morrow. Such a number of women at my meeting to-day.

"Tuesday, April 24th.—School as usual. Palaver with King finished and all serene. He sent Tom and Mr. P. a grand stick each. Sat up very late to finish mails for up-country."

At the end of May four of the King's wives were baptized, and Kivitidi was set apart for the work of an evangelist by the infant Church which undertook to support him.

Some three months later Mr. and Mrs. Lewis accompanied by Matoko, Kivitidi, Elembe, and three girls made an important journey to Madimba, a large district to the south and south-east of San Salvador, with a view to discover some place which would be suitable for the establishment of a new

station. The little expedition started early on August 18, 1888. Mrs. Lewis wrote notes of the journey, and we come up with the travellers as they are on the point of leaving Nsoni at noon August 20th.

“We started again at 1 p.m., crossed the Lunda River, where was a bridge of one stick, passed two small towns, and arrived at Kiunga at 2.50. The chief was not ready to receive us, so we sat down outside an empty house and waited patiently. The cause of the delay was the fact that, never having seen a white man in his town before, the chief was much frightened, and sent for his fighting men, who were assisting a neighbouring chief. He appeared at last surrounded by men with guns, but in obvious perplexity as to what our visit could mean.

“He was a most picturesque figure; an oldish man with an extraordinary head-dress, wearing his cloth arranged in a fashion which reminded us of the pictures of Aaron. He quite jumped when Tom offered to shake hands. Tom told him that we had come to speak to him about God, and all that we desired of him was a house to sleep in, and permission to speak to his people. I felt quite sorry for the old man; for between his fear of offending the white man, and his caution against falling into a trap, he did not know what to do. Tom somewhat allayed his fears by pointing to me as a proof that he had come on a peaceful errand. Finally it was agreed that we should have the house we were sitting against, and that the people should come to hear our message when the moon was up.

"At the time appointed the chief and his men came, fully armed, but said that the women were afraid. When we had given our message, they were much relieved, and afterwards a number of women came saying that they wished to hear too; so I sat outside my house for some time talking to them. The next morning chief and people pressed us to stay, and upon learning that we could not do so, said that as none of our party had done any bad palaver they would like to see a white man again. We were much interested in the Kiunga people, but decided that it would be premature to consider the planting of a station there just now.

"It was late and hot when we started, but I was comfortable and well shaded in my hammock. I had to alight twice in this stage of our journey as we came to rivers through which the men could not carry me. One passage was very awkward, the 'bridge' consisting of two pieces of stick which extended only half-way across, and that under water instead of over it. I took off shoes and stockings, waded to the end of the bridge, which was frightfully slippery, and was carried on two men's shoulders the rest of the way. Soon afterwards we reached Lunda.

"This is a large town, but the people are the most unpleasant we have met with—dirty, drunken, very much afraid of us, yet so full of curiosity that they did not leave us for one minute in peace. There are two chiefs here. One had just started out to bury his brother. He was called back, and did not venture forth again until we had gone. In the evening a crowd

assembled to hear what we had to say, but our speech made no impression, and they went away, evidently saying in their hearts, 'Is that all?' There were about a hundred and fifty present, and many of the men were half drunk. The house they gave us was filthy, and full of cockroaches—you know how I love them—and we were not sorry to depart next morning.

"August 21st.—Our journey to-day was short, and we arrived at Etoto about 11.30. This is a large town for Congo, containing about four hundred inhabitants, nicely situated on the top of a high hill slightly indented in the middle. We waited some little time for the coming of the chief, who seems rather an agreeable man, quiet and less important in his own eyes than most of these petty rulers are. He gave us one of his houses, or rather part of one, built of planks. We ventured to peep in at the other part, and found it full of old chairs, images of nkixi, and dreadful rat-holes, so we thought it expedient not to ask for the loan of that. The rats held high revels at night and seriously disturbed our slumbers.

"We discovered in this place a wife of the King of San Salvador, who was sick, one of my schoolgirls, and two schoolboys, who afforded us something of an introduction. The people were shy but friendly, and we quickly decided that this was the place we were seeking, if only the people were willing. Tom spoke to the chief men about the matter, saying that we should like to come often to teach the children to read, and to give them all some knowledge of God; asking them

also if they would be willing for us to build a house for these purposes. At first they could hardly believe him. It seemed too good to be true. But being assured that we were in earnest, they said, in African fashion, that 'they would drink water,' *i.e.*, consider the matter, and tell us next day.

"In the morning they declared that they would much like us to come, and we went with the chief to seek a site for our house and school. We chose a good one on the highest point of the hill, with a fine view across country to Arthington Falls. This settled, we returned to our house. I went to visit the King's wife, and after 'chop' I held a large meeting of women outside her house. There were some fifty or sixty present who had remained away from their farms on purpose. Then the men came, desiring to hear, and Tom had a long talk with them. In the evening two women came, asking to hear more, and after discussing matters with Matoko and Kivitidi we went to bed.

"August 24th.—To-day we started homewards, made a long journey, and had much trouble in getting through a very bad marsh. Once I was landed comfortably on the branch of a tree, and my hammock could not be moved one way or the other until Kivitidi came to the rescue with his long arms and legs. Our stray sheep (school-children) came with us from Etoto. We slept at Nkala, a miserable little town, chief away, few people, and no opportunity for speaking. The next morning, August 25th, we left early, made a long march over the hills, and arrived

at San Salvador at 11 p.m. We had a warm welcome, and found all well."

Mr. Lewis hoped, with the aid of Kivitidi, to commence building at Etoto in the course of a few weeks, but a series of misadventures and adversities postponed the work until the new year, and even then the evangelist had to make the start without the missionary's personal oversight and direction.

In September the marriage of Mr. Phillips to Miss Phillips was the occasion of glad excitement in San Salvador. It was intended that the marriage should take place at Underhill, but legal difficulties arose, as the parties were to reside in Portuguese territory. The interest of the event was increased by the presence of Mr. Holman Bentley, who was paying a short visit. Mrs. Lewis records: "September 18th, Tuesday.—Up early, went to the Resident's first, where the civil marriage was performed between Mr. and Miss Phillips, then came back and went to the chapel, which Tom and Mr. Bentley had decorated beautifully. Tom performed the ceremony, Mr. Bentley giving the bride away. The Resident, with Messrs. Pereiro and Dumas, came home to breakfast, and afterward we had our photos taken. Mr. Bentley left."

A few weeks later occurs another entry which the reader will be expecting. "October 31st, Wednesday. Had breakfast in our bedroom early. Wedding of Kivitidi and Tomba in chapel at 11 a.m.; then 'feed' at our house, and festivities all day. Mr. and Mrs. Phillips stayed to tea, and spent the evening. All went off well."

It was a grievous disappointment to all concerned that Mrs. Phillips, who commenced her missionary work with glad eagerness and no little aptitude, soon suffered serious illness, and in the earlier part of January she and her husband were compelled to leave for England.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Lewis has advanced so far in her mastery of the language that she finds herself making some modest literary ventures, of which she gives an amusing account in a letter dated December 29, 1888. It is not wonderful, perhaps, that her appreciation of the language was not as enthusiastic as that of the man whose stupendous labours were reducing it to literary form. Mrs. Lewis writes to Miss Hartland: "I do not wonder that you are amused by the look of the Congo hymns. It is a very ugly language, I think, in sound and appearance. But Holman Bentley thinks it lovely. It is as the red rag to the bull if one disparages this language to him. When he was here, I was wicked enough to remark that I thought it very unmusical, whereupon he replied, in severe tones: 'It has all the elements of a beautiful language.' The poetical mania has taken us all just now. The big boys are hard at work translating hymns. The trouble is to understand the English first, and then to get the right number of syllables. Some of their verses are not bad, others are most amusing, and require a great deal of puckering to get them in. I have just finished 'There is a Happy Land,' and our old hymn which we used to sing at Mr. Tucker's Bible-class, 'Children, will you go?' Mr. Phillips and Tom are both at it. We shall

have quite a San Salvador Supplement soon. But though the number of the hymns will be considerable, I will not say much for the quality. Yet they please the people, and will serve until a native poet arises."

In the same letter she tells of how the commencement of the projected station at Etoto has once more been delayed by an outbreak of small-pox. The people of the town, in their distress, much to the regret of the missionaries, and without their knowledge, sent for a witch doctor. He came. But the fear of the white man's influence was strong upon him, and, with admirable shrewdness, he affirmed that the witch was one of the people who had died of the pestilence, and having given this judgment, departed with discreet alacrity. Other troubles caused further delay, but at the end of January Kivitidi and Matoko started for Etoto to begin to build.

As the steady strain of the work and the inevitable trials of the climate were telling upon Mrs. Lewis, it was thought desirable in the early part of the year that, somewhat later, she should return and make a short stay in England. At the end of March she writes cheerily of the abandonment of this scheme, and of the possible substitution of a short visit to Madeira. She reports that Padre Barosa has written promising great reinforcements for the Catholic Mission at San Salvador, which she surmises will prove "mythical," as in other instances. The work at Etoto is making good progress. She also casually mentions that a leopard has located himself "just outside our fence," is raiding the live-stock of the

Mission, but, to her great regret, is too clever to be seen.

On April 20, 1889, Mrs. Lewis wrote a circular letter to be read in certain Sunday schools with which the mission maintained correspondence. It is too informing and suggestive to be omitted, and too long to be reproduced in full. So I give it in slightly condensed form.

“I suppose many of you have read in the *Missionary Herald* of the little branch station which we have established at a town called Etoto, two days' journey from San Salvador. Mr. Lewis visited Etoto about a month ago, and found the work going on well under the care of Kivitidi, our native evangelist. The services on Sunday and daily evening prayers are well attended, and thirty boys come regularly to school. As yet no girls have been induced to come. But as soon as the dry season arrives, I hope to pay them a visit with my husband, and then I have no doubt we shall get some girls to attend school. Mr. Moolinaar has just been spending a month there, and has visited some towns of the district. The school-house, with rooms for native teacher and missionary, is nearly finished. Please think of this new station and pray that many of the people may be brought to know and love our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

“The town Nlekai goes to on Sundays is called Mbanza Mputu and is about one and a half hour's walk distant. The townspeople have received the good news very gladly, and have themselves built a little meeting-house, that the rains may not stop them from hearing ‘God's palaver.’ My



CHIEF NOSO AND PART OF HIS FAMILY.

husband has visited them several times, and they have been anxious to see me, as white women are scarce in this part of the world. As there is a deep river to be crossed on the road, I sent word that if they wished to see me they must make a bridge. They have done this; and last week I went with Nlekai.

"I was heartily welcomed. All the people came together, and I talked to them for a long time about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; after which, the chief and other people asked many questions. They are very fond of singing, and know two or three hymns already; so we sang all they knew and I taught them another, 'Oh, what a Saviour!' which has been translated by one of our boys. Then I walked about the town and saw some sick people, everybody being anxious to know when I would come again.

"Before I left they told me that in a town not far away a witch palaver was to be held in three days' time. Many people had been sick and had died. A witch doctor had pointed out a certain woman as the witch. She was to undergo the trial by poison. But being very angry they had determined that she should surely die. The chief and the people of Mbanza Mputu had tried to prevent this wickedness, but their protests were not listened to, and they wished to know if we could do anything. I promised to tell my husband. He started off the next day and arrived just in time to stop the cruel deed. There was a long discussion, and at last they agreed not to harm the woman. Mr. Lewis then told them something about God, to which they listened attentively,

and afterwards begged him to come and teach them again. So you see, their wicked purpose is likely to turn out for the spread of the Gospel. The people at Mbanza Mputu have long ago thrown away their fetishes, and we hope that many of them may soon become true servants of God.

“When you are thinking about us out here, do not forget Nlekai and his work. He has just become engaged, though he will not be married for some years yet, and I think you may like to know how he got his future wife. Among the bad fashions of this dark land, one of the worst is, that men have many wives. The richer a man is the more wives he gets. Men buy little girls when they are quite small, and soon take them away to live with their other wives. Very often the little girls do not like to be taken away from their own families, but if they make a fuss they are beaten and tied and carried off.

“Well, the little girl whom Nlekai is to marry had been given by her family to a man who had ten wives already. He had bought a wife from the same family before. She had died, and so they gave him Bwingidi instead. She had been attending my school for some time, but her mother died, and soon after this man came to take her away. One Sunday, just as we had finished our morning service, she came running to us, begging to be allowed to stay, as she did not like the man, and did not wish to go where there was no school or teacher. He had come to fetch her the day before, but she had run away, had remained all night in the bush, and now they were looking for her.

"The next day all her people came; but when the 'husband' saw Bwingidi here, and dressed like the other girls, he said he did not want her, now that she had been living in the white man's house, but he wanted the money which he had paid to her family for a wife. So we settled the matter by paying the price on condition that her family made her perfectly free, and they signed a paper putting her in our charge till she married. She is a bright girl of eleven or twelve years, and now it has been arranged that she is to be Nlekai's wife when she grows up. . . .

"We have now another member of our mission family, a baby boy about five months old. His mother having died, his father left him with some women, and cared no more for him. No one could be found to nurse him. So he was just flung into the corner of a dirty house to starve. When my husband brought him to me, he was so weak that he could not move nor even cry, and had a great boil on his neck. However, after being washed and fed, he slept well, and in a day or two could kick and scream finely. He is getting on well now, though he has many ailments, the effects of his ill-treatment. We call him 'Daniel' and hope he will grow up to be good and brave like his namesake.

"Now I have told you all these things that you may know how the little children suffer in this country, and how much the people need to be taught about the Lord Jesus, Who loved little children. . . ."

Mrs. Lewis's estimate of her staying power indicated in the March letter proved to be over-

sanguine, and in June she was sent off to England, where she arrived in August, having made a visit to the Cameroons on the voyage. Naturally she was warmly welcomed by many friends and found refreshment and inspiration in the renewal of former associations. Her stay was brief, and in November she sailed for Africa in the ss. *Mexican*, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Graham, newly married, and Mr. Walter Stapleton, of whose character she formed a penetrating estimate, wholly justified by his notable, but all too short career. She much enjoyed the voyage and took kindest interest in the conversations of the two young men, who sharpened their wits by the discussion of high points of doctrine, and essayed to settle minor questions (of course without prejudice and upon adequate data), such as "whether dark girls or fair ones were the pluckiest."

The voyagers were met by Mr. Lewis and Mr. Weeks at Banana, and received a tumultuous welcome at Underhill, whither Mr. Lewis had been constrained to bring all the girls of the household, having no one to take charge of them in his absence. He also brought Daniel Jones, the one-time squalid, sickly, outcast baby, who in a few months had developed into a sleek, tiny tyrant who imagined that the world was made for him and "wanted to be king of everybody."

A still more touching welcome awaited Mrs. Lewis at San Salvador. The women were overjoyed by her return. They abandoned their work for the day, and for days to come kept bringing her presents, not "dashes" to be returned, but free gifts, "because they saw plenty joy."

It was "plenty joy" to Mrs. Lewis also to be in her own home again, which her husband had furbished and improved during her absence, and she looked for another year of work before the long vacation of the proper furlough. But Providence ordered otherwise. Mr. Lewis's health failed, and within six months they were on their way to England. The following paragraph from the *Missionary Herald* of July, 1890, may fitly close this chapter:—

"We are thankful to report the arrival of the Rev. Thos. and Mrs. Lewis from San Salvador. For some months past Mr. Lewis has suffered greatly from repeated and severe attacks of bilious fever with strongly marked typhoidal symptoms, which have greatly reduced his strength and rendered an immediate change absolutely needful. For nearly four years Mr. Lewis has been resident on the Congo without change."

CHAPTER VII

SECOND TERM AT SAN SALVADOR

MR. LEWIS gathered strength during the voyage. Upon arrival in England he was pronounced "much better" and Mrs. Lewis "very well." A visit to the Parkinsons at Deal and a stay with the Hartlands at Aberystwyth yielded much pleasure to all concerned and went far toward restoring Mr. Lewis to customary vigour. Toward the end of November Mrs. Lewis is busy with her old friends at Camden Road preparing for the Congo Sale and records with evident delight a surprise visit at the schoolroom by Grenfell, who had arrived in England two days earlier. On November 25th the Sale was opened by Mrs. Lewis, Mr. Baynes, the Secretary of the B.M.S., and the Rev. William Brock, of Hampstead, being among her supporters. She spoke in calm, simple, restrained, but intense fashion of her work among the women of San Salvador, and held a large audience in closest and most sympathetic attention.

And here I may remark—and the judgment is based not upon this speech only, but also upon many others heard in later years and more fully remembered — never was there a missionary

speaker who more conscientiously avoided excessive use of bright colouring in pictures of missionary success. Her nature was passionately truthful, and she ever sought as far as possible to make her audiences see things as they really were. As far as possible, I say, for her saddened eyes saw much which her woman's lips could never speak, and this she allowed her friends to understand.

In the New Year Mr. Lewis was sent north, south, east, and west on deputation journeys, but Mrs. Lewis's work was largely confined to the London district, in which she attended many meetings advocating the cause to which her life was given. Once she started at an hour's notice for Newport, Mon., and spoke at an evening meeting the same day, "with Tom and Mr. Evans, of Merthyr." As much as possible of her time was given to her "dear mother," Mrs. Hartland, who was at this time a confirmed invalid and subject to the discipline of much suffering, which she endured with exemplary Christian patience and submission.

It is interesting to me, as it will be to many readers, to gather from the diary that Grenfell was a frequent visitor at the rooms of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis. The entry for Saturday, March 21st, surprised me. "Mr. Grenfell and Mr. Hawker called." The eclecticism of memory is one of the mysteries of life. Incidents of no moment and little interest are retained with photographic clearness, other incidents which it would be precious to recall pass utterly out of mind. Clearly upon this day I must have spent some time—probably an hour, perhaps more—in con-

versation with two people whom I regarded with affectionate esteem and whose lives I was destined to write long years afterwards. Yet I confess with wonder and humiliation that the utmost effort at recollection leaves me destitute of the faintest remembrance of the fact.

Six weeks later Mr. and Mrs. Lewis were both down with influenza. The illness was somewhat serious and involved a visit to Ventnor, where lost energies were recovered. They returned to London in the middle of June, and on the day of arrival met Mrs. J. J. Brown and Messrs. Grenfell and Oram. On June 19th Mrs. Lewis records with a note of relief that she has "passed Dr. Roberts," and on the last day of the month she and her husband leave London for Liverpool amid the cheers of a company of friends who had gathered at St. Pancras for the send-off. Mrs. Parkinson accompanied them to Liverpool, where Mr. Parkinson joined them later. On Wednesday, July 1st, the little party spent the day at Southport. Surely it must have been a wet day, for Mrs. Lewis smites the fair town with the scornful phrase, "wretched place," and is glad to get back to Liverpool to tea. An evening entertainment in Liverpool proved as little satisfactory as Southport. Perhaps she was in no mood for entertainment.

The next day she sailed upon her fourth voyage to Africa, which, though enlivened by many incidents of interest, proved on the whole the most wearisome and comfortless of her experience. On August 20th she writes: "Arrived at Banana about 7 a.m. After breakfast went ashore and

called at the Dutch House. Went to see dear Annie's grave. Tom photographed it. Rather tired."

The mention of "Dear Annie's grave" calls for a slight digression. Annie was the youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Smith, of Camden Road Church, and one of Mrs. Lewis's girl friends, whose name has already been mentioned. She became engaged to Mr. Percy Comber and went out to Africa to be married. Arriving at St. Thomé on the voyage, she was overjoyed to find that the homeward-bound steamer was in port and that among her passengers were Mr. and Mrs. Lewis. There lies before me as I write her letter to Mrs. Hartland, written at the close of this happy day of meeting, telling of how her friends were brought aboard her ship and of the eager, happy converse which ensued.

They parted. The Lewises arrived safely in England. Annie Smith was married at Matadi on June 5th, and passed up to Wathen, where she worked for a few months with great joy and much promise. Toward the end of the year serious illness fell upon her, and under doctor's orders she started for home, accompanied by her husband. But her journey ended at Banana on December 19th. She was laid to rest beside the sea, and her stricken husband turned back to his work—alone. The sorrow at Camden Road was great. She had gone from us such a little while before, so full of radiant life, so joyous in her consecration to the great cause. Mrs. Lewis was present at the memorial service held in Camden Road Church on January 25, 1891, and

the reader will appreciate the sorrowful interest of her visit to "dear Annie's grave," and the intensity of her sympathy with "poor Percy, so sad and lonely."

On August 28th, Mrs. Lewis writes from Tunduwa (Underhill) lamenting endless delays. The old King of San Salvador is dead, and the hoped-for carriers are detained by the prolonged obsequies of their late sovereign. She is still in Tunduwa on September 6th, but has been of service in nursing Mr. Lawson Forfeitt through an illness, whose return to England, she suggests, should be arranged speedily. Finally, on September 12th, San Salvador is reached, and the longed-for work is resumed. A fortnight later Mrs. Graham and Mrs. Phillips are on the point of leaving for England. Their husbands are to accompany them to the coast, and Mr. Graham is to remain in charge at Underhill, while Mr. Forfeitt takes his much-needed furlough.

It is not practicable, as it is not necessary, to attempt anything like a continuous story of the next two or three years. The work proceeds along the lines laid down, and the days are passed in the quiet and sometimes monotonous discharge of routine duties. San Salvador is off the main line of the Mission, and Mrs. Lewis and her friends live in a little world of their own, which occasionally seems to be very small and secluded. But the work is too constantly exacting to give time for dispiriting reflection upon its isolation, nor is it destitute of occasional excitements.

Mrs. Lewis resumed with undiminished zeal her school work and her women's classes. Her medical and dispensary work steadily increases. There are successes which cheer and disappointments which test faith and endurance. An untoward accident interrupts the promising work at the sub-station of Etoto. Some of the "boys" become less zealous, and, like certain of their white brethren in England, yield to the seductions of worldly interest. Kivitidi resigns the office of evangelist, and occupies himself in tailoring and trading, which he finds much more remunerative. Yet he continues to live the life of a Christian man, and renders to the Mission much voluntary service. Nlekai and others involve themselves and their missionary friends in troubles and embarrassments by their matrimonial aspirations and ventures.

The marriage business is still more distracting in relation to the girls. It is not to be thought of that they should not marry; they marry when they are mere children, and their babies keep them away from school at the time when they would profit most by instruction. In some instances the grandmothers take care of the babies, and set the girl-mothers free. Mrs. Lewis observes that the grandmothers are much more devoted to the babies than the mothers, and she surmises that this is due to the fact that the mothers are mere children themselves, too immature to appreciate or discharge maternal responsibilities.

1892 was the centenary year of the Baptist Missionary Society. The little Church at San Salvador, numbering thirty-nine members, resolved to make its contribution to the Centenary

Fund in the form of a Christmas collection. The conditions of native life made it desirable that the gifts should be brought in as soon as they were ready. If they were stored up in the native huts they might be used or lost, so the Christmas collection began early.

Writing on New Year's Day, Mrs. Lewis says: "Kivitidi was the first to bring his offering. Since then the people have been constantly coming, and a strange collection you would find it. Some have brought cloth, some beads, some fowls, some baskets full of ground nuts. One woman brought a keg of gunpowder, and one man—the largest contribution of all—a pig. This last offering caused much amusement. It was so difficult to catch that it seemed doubtful whether it would be ready for Christmas Day, either dead or alive. However, on the morning of Christmas Eve, it arrived dead, borne triumphantly in a hammock, and made a capital Christmas feast for all the people on the station.¹ The people have indeed offered willingly, and have both surprised and gladdened our hearts by their generosity. On Christmas morning a large congregation met together in our chapel for a thanksgiving service, when the names of the contributors were read out, and it was announced that the total value of the collection was £33 14s. 3d. Earnest prayers were offered by some of the native Christians that God's blessing might go with their gifts, and we closed by singing the *Te Deum* and the *Doxology*."

In the same letter Mrs. Lewis tells of certain

¹ See Appendix, Note C.

horrible cruelties perpetrated in the district in deference to native customs. Two runaway slaves were captured, tied to long poles firmly fixed in the earth, and left to starve. In returning from Tunduwa Mr. Phillips saw the charred bones of a woman who had been burned to death in a witch palaver. In a town near by a slave, for a threatening word, was put in irons, his neck made fast in the fork of a heavy stick six feet long. In this plight he had remained for twenty-one days when Mr. Lewis came upon him, while the death palaver was in process. Happily, in this instance, he was able to effect a rescue, and the man was taken to work on the Mission station.

On April 28th in a long letter to her niece, Miss Ethel Percival, Mrs. Lewis tells of Nlekai beginning work in Mawunza; of the hindrance to the Mission arising from the unpopularity of the present Portuguese officials and the Catholic Mission; and then gives the following account of her garden, which is yielding Mr. Lewis recompense for his labours.

“We have lots of flowers in our garden—English ones, too—verbenas, heliotropes, petunias, and roses pink and white. We have also a quantity of maize, plantains, and bananas in our kitchen garden, splendid onions and potatoes, which will be ready shortly. Yams, too, are coming on. Limes are in abundance, and the trees are laden with oranges, which I hope will ripen in due time. This is the Vegetable dispensation. Under Mr. Graham it was the Animal dispensation, and the two do not run well to-

gether. Now our live-stock is kept within bounds, and consists of one goose, which is fattening for the table, several ducks, a few goats, a lot of pigeons, and one dear rabbit, Jack, who has a spacious yard all to himself, for his tiresome wife has run away. How she went is a mystery. Mr. Phillips also possesses a monkey, who lives in a cage, poor fellow! I forgot the fowls, whose name is legion."

"June 28th.—I don't think I told you that since I returned this time I have started quite a midwifery practice. It came without seeking. Of course I could not do anything in this line until I could speak without an interpreter. Now I am in request at the advent of every baby. I keep a registry of births, that we may have some idea of the children's ages. I could tell you some laughable things about habits and customs, but I cannot write them. At last, this month, we have dispensed with interpreters altogether—*i.e.*, Tom and I. I think Mr. Phillips will also when he comes back. We have managed for some time everything except the regular services. In these we were afraid of making mistakes, which are so easy. But for three Sundays Tom has preached in the native language, and all the people say he speaks well, and that they can understand him perfectly. Last Sunday my interpreter was away, and having asked the women if they would understand me, and being reassured, I made the attempt, though I was awfully nervous. At the end one of the women kindly told me that they understood perfectly, and liked it much better. It means a lot more work, as one has

to prepare the words as well as the matter of one's sermons; and I have a Bible-class in school on Wednesday, another in the house on Thursday evening, and give an address at the women's prayer-meeting on Saturday. Then there are the Sunday school and the women's meeting on Sunday, and in every case the preparation must be different, as some of the audience come to all. However, we are very thankful to have got so far. It seems like beginning a new stage in our missionary work. . . . People in England seem to forget sometimes that I am as much interested in their work as they are in mine. It is the same work, only we are on distant service. But we do not forget the work at home, either in our thoughts or in our prayers.

"July 29th.—I do hope dear mother is not suffering very much; we so often think of her and of you all. I am thinking that perhaps tomorrow you and Mr. Hartland are setting off upon your travels. We should just like to fly over and go with you for a month to Wales. Wouldn't it be jolly? But we are unable to get away, even for a journey here. Mr. Phillips has been away just on three months, and we are alone. We have heard nothing from Tunduwa since last mail. We suppose the carriers are afraid to come, and we cannot get away to go to him. There is a palaver proceeding in the town, and the King forbids any one to leave. One family, who are slaves of the Padres, are claiming another family as slaves of theirs, and the Padres are backing them. This same dispute was brought up and settled several times, some years ago.

The whole town is in a state of commotion, and nearly every day the people assemble under the big tree. The King, got up in striking costume varied from day to day, sits on his throne with the Queen beside him. They are a pair! The disputing parties, holding their guns, are ranged opposite one another. Then the counsellors on either side sing songs, make speeches, and finish up with a dance. Of course there is also any amount of malavu drinking.

“The old road to Noki is shut up. There are other roads by which we send letters, but the carriers are all afraid to go for loads. The Portuguese talk about soldiers coming, but they are a long time on the way. The Resident told Tom the other day that they are going to make a military station half-way to keep the road open. I wish they would remove this Resident. There have been palavers ever since he came, and he does not know how to settle them. This palaver has brought many strangers to the town, and they attend our meetings, so good may come out of evil. But all these things interrupt our work. The minds of the people are unsettled, and full of other things. I have just received a new girl into the house, and she *is* a caution! the wildest specimen I have yet had to deal with. She is put under our protection by the Resident, and is quite grown up.”

The following extract from a circular letter written on September 26th gives an instructive and idyllic picture of a Congo baptism, with certain other matters suggestive of the dark background:—

“We had a very happy time at Mbanza Mputu at the end of last month. Tom and I went over on Tuesday, and stayed two nights. There were six whom we wished to baptize, the chief, his sister, three of his wives, and another man. But we found that one of the women was sick, and another away. The event caused quite an excitement in the towns around, as the chief holds a position, second only to that of the King of Congo. On the day before the baptism the women of the town were hard at work preparing to receive visitors from other places. A pig was killed, and in every house might be seen groups of women pounding pepper and skinning pumpkin seeds for seasoning the dishes on the morrow. We spent the day in speaking to inquirers, and preparing the candidates. None of these people had ever seen a baptism, so it was necessary to explain every detail to them.

“Early on Thursday morning Mr. Phillips arrived from San Salvador, our boy Vita coming with him. Soon afterwards nearly all our Church members followed. After they had rested a little we went down to the water. At the bottom of a very steep hill runs a watercourse, obstructed at one point by very large stones, forming a natural basin, into which a spring rises, so that there is water in the basin even when the course is dry, as it is now. A steep cliff almost surrounds the basin, covered with ferns and tropical growths, the branches of trees interlacing overhead. The congregation sat on the sides of this dell, which formed a splendid meeting-place, Tom standing on one of the big stones in the middle.

“The hymn sounded grandly; Kivitidi prayed; Tom explained the rite, and then baptized the candidates, beginning with Vita, of whom you will have read in the *Herald*. He took the first place, that the others might see what was required. He was followed by the chief, and the other man, and then came the two women, one of them very old and thin and shrivelled, the other quite a young girl. After the benediction we climbed up the hill and returned to the town, making our way to the little meeting-house, where we celebrated the Lord’s Supper. The Church members and those newly baptized half filled the house, but other people crowded in, or sat round the doors, curious to see what we were doing. Mr. Phillips presided and gave the right hand of fellowship to the five new members. Nlekai and Kalendenda offered prayer, and then after a few words of explanation from Kivitidi we ate and drank together the memorials of dying Love. We hope soon to baptize three more at least.

“Pray for these new converts that they may be kept faithful. At present things go smoothly with them. The fact that their chief is a humble Christian makes all the difference, and saves them from many trials and temptations. Only one thing marred our pleasure. Mr. Phillips brought news of a terrible calamity which had happened in San Salvador the day before. A young man who has been one of our hammock-bearers from the beginning of the Mission, Ntoni, was overtaken by one of the grass fires while hunting, and horribly burnt. Mr. Phillips did what he could, but the poor patient died in great



BWINGIDI (EVANGELIST'S WIFE) AND GIRLS' SCHOOL AT NKABA, AN OUT-STATION NEAR SAN SALVADOR.

agony the same evening, and upon our return from Mbanza Mputu the funeral took place. He had not professed faith in Christ, but he knew the gospel well, and one of our Christians, who was with him when he died, says that he spoke much about his sins and prayed for forgiveness for Jesus' sake. We can but leave him with God, assured that He Who received the dying thief will never turn away from a dying sinner's cry.

"So many horrid things have happened lately. The other day in a town close by, a man beat his wife to death. The chief of Mbanza Mputu has been over to the Resident about the matter, and is doing his best to find the man, who has run away. It seems that he was drunk with palm wine and had been beating his wives all the evening. The palm wine drinking has been dreadful this season, the yield has been so plentiful. We are trying to get our boys to leave off taking it altogether, but it is very difficult to teach them self-denial for the sake of others."

While she was writing this letter, news was on the way to Congo destined to fill the heart of Mrs. Lewis with heavy sorrow, sorrow which her husband would share profoundly, and in which all our Congo missionaries would have their part. Some few months earlier, in writing to Miss Hartland, Mrs. Lewis said: "I am sure we shall never cease to thank God for all the love and kindness which dear mother and you have shown to us. Having lost our own mothers, we have appreciated her love all the more."

On September 13th, Mrs. Hartland died. Mrs. Lewis's diary for 1892 is missing, and the letter or letters in which she poured out her own sorrow, and her sympathy with those whom the bereavement touched yet more nearly, have not come to my hand. Assured that Mrs. Lewis would desire some tribute to the "dear mother," who loved her so well, to appear in the record of her own life, I venture to reprint certain paragraphs from a short article which I wrote a few days after Mrs. Hartland had entered into rest¹:—

"After four years of heroic service John Hartland died in Comber's arms, and his mother bowed her head, as mothers do. But when she rose again, it was not to regard this costly Congo Mission with reserved toleration which applauded itself for not changing to dislike, but with self-devotion and enthusiastic love. The life of her son was in the Mission; so she took it to her heart and carried it gently in her bosom before God.

"Mrs. Hartland lived as much upon the Congo as in Falkland Road, and was more intimately acquainted with the history of the Mission, internal and external, than perhaps any other person, excepting only Mr. Baynes. Almost all the missionaries knew her. Before they went out they were invited to Falkland Road, and when the interview was over they knew themselves to be possessed of at least one mother-hearted friend. Aware of the secret of her love each man and woman honoured her unspoken claim to some measure of their filial affection, and

¹ *The Missionary Herald*, 1892, p. 400.

the motherless among them called her "mother." Upon returning to this country they went to see her, naturally; and while upon the field many of them corresponded with her, receiving letters which were like cold water in a thirsty land. Many times have I seen her, with hands distorted and half paralysed by relentless rheumatism, writing painfully and patiently to her friends upon the Congo. Her letters were peculiarly precious, because they were indited by one who understood the work, who loved the workers, and believed in God. And so from one quiet heart, in one quiet London home, there went forth waves of spiritual energy that were felt hundreds of miles above Stanley Pool. This was her work. She wrote till she could no longer hold the pen; she dictated till she could no longer think sustainedly by reason of agony and growing weakness; then she sent messages; then she murmured prayers; and now she is with Him Who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

"We do not know much about the gates of heaven. We do not know whether some vigilant angel on the battlements of God's city announces with silver trumpet the coming of the enfranchised soul. We do not know whether comrades and kinsfolk hurry to the gates to welcome and congratulate their beloved. We can only dream. But if it be so, the sainted heroes of the Congo Mission were by the gates last week.

"Two things were remarkable in Mrs. Hartland's life to all who knew her—unselfishness and faith, evinced in little things and great. A few days before her death I visited her, and,

leaning over her bed that my voice might reach the ear that was growing heavy I noticed four exquisite roses lying near her face. She insisted that I should take one. In my prayer, I used the word 'doubts,' and I shall never forget the quick and confident words that followed the 'Amen'—
'I have no doubts.' Verily, she has none."

CHAPTER VIII

SECOND TERM AT SAN SALVADOR—*continued*

THOUGH the missionaries craved greater progress the work of the year 1892 was encouraging, and their devotion and their hope were unabated. In his official report Mr. Lewis records that eleven persons were baptized during the year, and that the membership stands at forty-seven, a clear increase of nine. The Christmas collection was again made with enthusiasm, and concerning this Mr. Lewis writes: "We closed the year by making a special effort to seat our chapel. We have a spacious native building, but it has never been seated, and our few forms are next to no good. We suggested that the Church and congregation should join in defraying the expenses of good pitch-pine seats on iron standards, ordered from England. They took it up enthusiastically, and last week made a collection with this object. The meeting was the largest we ever had in Congo, and goods to the value of £50 were taken. This is more than we really needed, but we can use it in some other way."

The report contains two lines which are significant in relation to the work of Mrs. Lewis: "The girls' school has had no interruption through the past year, and the girls have made satisfactory progress. There are sixty-two scholars, four of whom are boarders."

On February 2, 1893, Mrs. Lewis wrote a long letter to Miss Hartland reporting a fortnight's itineration, made with her husband, in the course of which they visited many places where no white man had been seen before. The women were delighted to find that she could speak with them, and she and Mr. Lewis agreed that in most places "the women were by far the better part of the population."

In this letter occurs the following interesting passage about her girls:—

"You ask in your letter if we have any nice bright girls, like the boys. Several other people have asked much the same question, and I begin to fear that I have not said enough about the girls and women. I am so much afraid of giving a wrong impression, and have perhaps gone to the other extreme. There has been so much fuss made at home over these boys that many people seem to think them paragons of excellence, and that our work lies mainly among them. You see when people come out first it is only with the boys they have to do, as they alone understand English. It takes much longer time to get to know the girls and women. Since I have been in Africa my work has lain entirely among them, and I consider, on the whole, that it is decidedly encouraging.

“Two of my girls are now teachers, helping us in school. Another, who is married to Zwarky, Mr. Grenfell’s boy, has a very good character from every one up river. Yet another who married Lo last summer, though not so clever with her brains as some, is a dear good girl and a splendid nurse. She nursed Mrs. Graham’s baby, and was most devoted. These four are all Christians. Of course we have had some trouble, some naughty girls, but they do not exceed the boys in that regard; and although we have many more women than men in the Church, we have not yet had to exercise discipline on one. Two have lately fallen into sin, but have seemed so truly penitent that we felt we could only say to them, ‘Go, and sin no more.’

“The girls I have in the house now are comparatively new. Ntumba, who is engaged to Elembe, is a very quiet useful girl who is getting on nicely. She has been with us just a year. Nsukula, who is engaged to our cook, Manwana, is a very bright little girl and, I believe, a Christian. She has been in the day school a long time, and can read fluently, but has only been in the house a few months. Nsunda, who is quite a young woman, has been here about six months, and is under our protection from her own father. She is very wild, but not at all stupid. Then there is Ndungani, who has just come. She is the King’s daughter and is engaged to Vita. She is a very big girl, and seems very anxious to learn. Another is just coming, Kuvovwa. She has been at school a long time, but I fear is rather stupid. However, we must see what can be done with her.

“Of course our great object in dealing with these girls is to lead them to become followers of Jesus Christ, and we are very thankful when this is the result of our teaching. Unfortunately we can never keep them as long as we keep the boys, because they get married too soon, according to our notions ; but I am very glad if they will only wait until they are fairly grown. The marriage question in its many aspects is our greatest trouble, and that can only be remedied by teaching the girls and women, as well as the boys and men, to think and act rightly in the matter. Only women can do this. It is most important to let the girls understand, as I think they do now here in San Salvador, that we take them and teach them for their own sakes, and not simply because they are engaged to certain boys. I go on the principle of never keeping a girl against her will, for I have only a limited amount of time and strength, and I feel it better that they should be spent in training a few who wish to learn, than in coercing a larger number, retained against their will. Although I have to be very strict, I think they like it, and we are on the best of terms. I treat them as much as possible as I should treat school-children at home. Now I think you know most of what there is to know about my girls.”

The report said : “The girls’ school has had no interruption through the past year.” But the girls’ school and all Mrs. Lewis’s work in San Salvador were destined to suffer serious interruption full soon. At the end of March, 1893, she records that her husband has been seriously ill, and that all things are packed up for a voyage to Grand Canary,

where it is proposed that they shall spend five or six weeks, in the hope that so much rest and change may effect such restoration as will enable him to resume his work without a return to England. She is thankful that her own health has been preserved, and the general concern displayed by the natives in her husband's illness is noted with grateful appreciation. The chiefs of neighbouring towns have been assiduous in their inquiries, and carriers, many more than they would need, have eagerly volunteered for the journey to the coast, that they might serve those whom they esteem highly, though it is the middle of the wet season.

Mrs. Lewis had received news in advance of a plum-pudding which had been despatched in honour of her birthday, and says in a postscript to the letter containing the foregoing particulars, that they are hoping to meet the plum-pudding at Tunduwa. They did meet the plum-pudding at Tunduwa, but no immediate intimacy ensued. It was handed to them just before their steamer sailed, and they handed it back to Mr. John Pinnock, to be taken care of till the first week in July, when they hoped to share the joy of it with him, and maybe others.

On May 10th they arrived at Grand Canary, having made the voyage in the steamer *Lulu Bohlen*, which they hoped to catch again upon her return from England, as they well liked her appointments and her officers. Two days after landing Mrs. Lewis reports that Mr. Lewis is much better, and that they are comfortably housed in an hotel which is made charming by spacious gardens ablaze with flowers. The island is not

so pretty as Madeira, but much drier, and therefore more suitable to their health requirements. Her letter continues:—

“This island is, of course, Spanish, and terribly priest-ridden. The people are wretched and dirty. Oh, the contrast between the miserable shanties of Canary, with their dirty, half-naked children, and the clean, sweet cottages of Wales! We went into the cathedral the other day, a strange, uninteresting building, where the priests were droning the service. The only thing we admired was a series of pictures, of more than life-size, illustrating “The Way of the Cross.” I was glad to see them there, and hoped that some poor people would derive from them knowledge of Christ’s love and suffering, which they might not otherwise obtain.

“There are crowds of lazy, sleek priests about, who grind every possible penny out of these poor people. Next to no mission work seems possible among them, the restrictions are so many. There is the Sailors’ Institute, for English sailors especially, and the English church, recently opened, for English visitors. I think the Searles do a little, and perhaps the English clergyman does; I do not know. But it is very little. There is one comfort, we shall have somewhere to go on Sunday. There will be the church in the morning; we have promised to go down to tea with the Searles; and in the evening there will be the Gospel Service for sailors. I have promised to do my best to play the hymns for them. There is a man-of-war lying here now, so the sailors, or many of them, will be present. I was asked to

speak, as they say the sailors listen better to ladies; but I begged off for next Sunday at least. I am not comfortable in speaking to men only."

As Mr. Lewis grew stronger they were able to make interesting excursions into the heart of the island, and in the course of a journey to an extinct crater received beautiful hospitality at the hands of a venerable peasant couple, of which Mrs. Lewis gives an idyllic picture.

The first day of June brought the sojourners no little joy in the appearing of Mr. W. C. Parkinson, who had so timed a flying visit to Grand Canary that he might spend a few days with Mr. and Mrs. Lewis. Mr. Parkinson was and is an honoured and devoted member of the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society; he was the Superintendent of Camden Road Sunday School, under whom Mrs. Lewis served in earlier years, and withal an intimate personal friend. Mr. Parkinson was accompanied by his daughter May, who, as a child, had known Mrs. Lewis in the Sunday School, and in the class conducted by Thomas Comber. She also was inspired by missionary ideals, and has since served the cause of Christ for many years on the hard field of Morocco.

The four following days were golden days glowing with the glad, free intercourse of kindred minds, maintained amid delightful physical conditions. The happiness passed into memory on June 5th, when their friends left, but Mrs. Lewis's remark: "We did just enjoy the Parkinsons' visit. It was splendid, hearing all about everybody, and I think they enjoyed it too," indicates how keen the happiness had been.

The stay in Grand Canary had done all that was hoped for in mending the health of Mr. Lewis, and on June 13th, when the *Lulu Bohlen* was hourly expected, to take them back to Congo, Mrs. Lewis wrote a letter to her friend, Miss Hartland, which bubbles over with high spirits and pulsates with laughter. It contains a long, humorous account of an equestrian picnic expedition, made by the Lewises and certain acquaintances, to a distant part of the island. The use of the convenient epithet "equestrian" involves a certain economy of truth, for most of the horses were donkeys, and one of them was a mule. In fact, there was only one horse, but the reader will pardon the inexactitude for the sake of euphony. The letter was accompanied by a pencil sketch of the cavalcade. Candour compels me to confess that the artistry is of the nursery order, and that the names written beneath the figures in the picture are necessary for identification, save in the case of Mr. Lewis, whose long beard, black spectacles, and big helmet would enable the reader of the epistle to be sure of him at once. I quote one paragraph:—

"As we sat waiting for coffee we rested in various fashions. Tom lay on the floor with his feet on a chair. The other two gentlemen sat in an opposite corner, each with his chair tilted up, and his feet on another. Our ride had made us so lively that we laughed continually. When the waiter appeared with the coffee—none of your sleek waiters in evening dress, but a very rough Spanish man in country clothes—he asked if Tom would have his coffee on the floor. Tom answered

‘Yes.’ Whereupon Mr. Kennedy laughingly instructed the waiter to pour it down his throat. And this the obedient fellow was on the point of doing, with utmost gravity, evidently regarding it as one more freak of ‘those English,’ who ride donkeys and take long walks for pleasure. We had a splendid ride back, my donkey keeping up with Mr. Kennedy’s horse and coming in at a gallop, far ahead of all the rest.”

In good health and good heart Mr. and Mrs. Lewis left Grand Canary on board the *Lulu Bohlen*, sailing on June 15th, and early in July were safe at Tunduwa, greatly cheered by good news of the Mission. Their short stay at the base station was made memorable by the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Grenfell, who appeared just in time to partake of the plum-pudding, which was destined for exceptional honour. Writing on July 5th to Miss Hartland, Mrs. Lewis says: “We had the plum-pudding for dinner to-day, and just before ‘chop’-time Mr. and Mrs. Grenfell arrived, so they partook of it as well. Mr. G. said he hardly dared to, but must for your sake. He did not know of dear mother’s death, as his letters failed to reach him and were sent back here. He is now reading them all. Though he looks very well, he has been ailing for some days. We were ardently hoping that he would come before we left, as was Mr. Forfeitt. So the Pinnocks, Messrs. Forfeitt, Pople, and Kirkland, Mr. and Mrs. Grenfell, Mr. and Mrs. Roger and ourselves, all ate of your pudding and enjoyed it. It was first-rate after all these months. I thought you would like to know.”

“San Salvador, August 27th.—Since my last letter

Messrs. Grenfell and Lawson Forfeitt have been here for a flying visit. We were so sorry they could not stay over Sunday. It was such a pleasure to have them, and they said their coming did them both good. Mr. Grenfell stayed at Mr. Graham's house, and Mr. Forfeitt with us, but they both 'chopped' here, and we had welcome talk with them about many matters. They are both special favourites with us. We were sorry Mrs. Grenfell could not come, but she had not returned from the Cameroons."

A fuller account of this visit is given in "The Life of George Grenfell" (page 338), including a letter from him, in which he refers to the great change which had come over the place since his previous visit, and proceeds: "The Church members number forty-nine; the scholars in regular attendance, about twice that number, the girls being more numerous than the boys; a fact largely due to the marked influence of Mrs. Lewis, who is a splendid missionary."

"October 31.—The commodity, time, has been very scarce with me lately. You may possibly have heard that Mrs. Phillips had a son on the 7th of this month. He is a darling little fellow, and of course I love him muchly, as you know my predilections in that line. Mrs. Phillips is getting on nicely. I have just returned from bathing baby, and getting her up. She is now sitting on her piazza.

"February 5, 1894.—If you only knew how busy I am you would forgive a short letter I am sure. I will just tell you in detail of my day's work and then you will know how time flies. Directly after

breakfast this morning came prayers with the girls, then I gave out 'chop' to them and the small boys, and arranged dinner for ourselves with the cook. After this I dispensed medicine to over sixty people, and you can imagine what a job this is. Next came conversation with some Christian women who had come over from two other towns for Communion yesterday, and had many things to discuss before they went back. Then I took a class of inquirers from one of these towns, consisting of six women. By that time it was after twelve, noon.

"Just as I was coming to sit down quietly, one of my house-girls came to speak to me. So I sat down in my bedroom to listen to the good news that she wished to give her heart to Christ. While she was speaking another girl came on the same errand. When I got to the sitting-room I found Tom talking to one of our boys, one of those everlasting marriage palavers which is not settled yet. By that time there were ten minutes left before dinner, after which we get an hour's rest, and need it, especially just now when the weather is broiling in the middle of the day. After rest and a cup of tea I wrote a note to one of our boys at Tunduwa about another matrimonial affair, and then went to school for two hours. When I came out I found Mr. Pople in fever and Tom looking after him. Then I took a quarter of an hour's stroll outside, and have been writing ever since tea. I was forced to write many letters for this mail. This is a fair sample of a day. Only the evenings are usually given to teaching, sewing, or translating.

“We had a delightful baptismal service last week, when five persons from one town, one from Mbanza Mputu, and two of my schoolgirls confessed Christ. I have written in full about the candidates to Mr. Baynes, so perhaps you may see the letter in the *Herald*. . . . We are so delighted to hear about the Congo Sale. You have done splendidly this year!”

“May 22nd. [To a correspondent.]

“There is no doubt we shall require them [unmarried women missionaries] by and by as the Mission develops. At present all the work among women is done by missionaries’ wives. I should say the chief qualifications for a woman missionary, either married or single—after, of course, those which are spiritual—are, first, and most essential, really good health and a sound constitution, then, common sense, a sound knowledge of all household matters including the making of clothes, aptness to teach, and a cheerful, contented disposition. These, with a large stock of patience, a heart full of love, some knowledge of nursing and medicine if possible, and a single eye to the glory of God, will, I think, make an ideal missionary. Alas! we feel we fall far short of this ideal, but it is well to aim high. I have always regarded Mrs. Mary Moffat as my model, and have many times taken ideas from her life and work. I think one who is to become the wife of a missionary could not do better than study her life. . . .

“Now a little about our work. We are very short-handed just now. My husband and I are quite alone, and are likely to be for some time.

We are always busy, and cannot do half the work. We have at this station a native Church of fifty-nine members, thirteen of whom belong to other towns. These, we believe, are Christians, but the majority cannot read, and they all need constant teaching and supervision. Then we have a boys' school of sixty, which meets every morning, and a girls' school in the afternoon with eighty-five names on the books. Of course some of these are irregular, so that the average attendance would be a hundred and ten boys and girls. Then we have schools in three other towns. Two young men who were our personal boys are in charge of them, and there are over a hundred and twenty people in attendance. In all our schools there are a good many who are no longer children, but who are anxious to learn to read.

“Three times a week I have a dispensary, giving medicines to all who come. I have about one hundred and fifty patients weekly, sometimes more. Some are very sad cases for which we can do little. Others we are able to help and sometimes to cure. We have the boys and girls living with us who are trained to work in different ways. You can imagine that all this with classes, services, visitations of the sick and others in their own houses, keeps our hands pretty full. But we long so intensely to go about among the other towns and preach the Good Tidings. Several of these towns are visited on Sundays by the native Christians, but only those that are within walking distance, and there are scores beyond, speaking the same language which would gladly welcome us, but we cannot go for lack of helpers. If only the young

men of England could really know the greatness of the work, and the scarcity of the workers, I am sure many would willingly offer themselves. One qualification I omitted to mention, needed by men and women, a good education. We do not need merely good people, but those who can influentially lead others. For after all Africa must be evangelised by her own people."

"September 5th. (To Mrs. J. Jenkyn Brown.)—You ask if the deaths occurred near us. Both of the brethren [Messrs. Oram and Balfern] were well known to us, but one died at our farthest station [Bopoto], hundreds of miles distant, and the other on his way home, at Madeira. It is a rare thing for us to see any of our colleagues from the other stations. We are quite out of the world here, even the Congo world. It is a drawback in some respects, but there are advantages, and we are so busy that we have no time to pine for society. Still it would be very pleasant to see our friends sometimes, and the idea of being 'spirited over to Birmingham for rest and petting' is most alluring. But when we look around and see just our two selves, and our fellow-missionary, Mr. Graham, with every other influence, in the place and about it for hundreds of miles, telling against truth and righteousness, we can only hope and pray to be allowed to remain and work here.

"October 4th.—Your last letter was written from Devonshire and called up visions of lovely country walks which I should not mind sharing if only one could fly backwards and forwards. But there is no holiday for us. For the last ten days or so we have been busier than ever. We have been having

a grand vaccination frolic. A few weeks ago our Resident left to be promoted to a better place. He wrote back from Noki to Tom, and sent him some tubes of vaccine. Most of it was bad, as it usually is by the time it comes here, but one tube was good, from which we vaccinated our house-children; then from them some of the outside people, and so on. The news soon spread, and people came in crowds. Every morning hundreds are to be seen entering the station. We all go to chapel and have prayers first; then I take all the medical work, while Tom and Mr. Graham go at it as hard as they can. You can imagine it is no play. Yesterday I gave medicine to over fifty people while they vaccinated 402!—225 were done to-day. This has been going on for nearly a fortnight, and ‘still there’s more to follow.’

“The people come from towns far and near, for they are terribly afraid of smallpox, and vaccination is something tangible which they can understand. So many are quite strangers, knowing nothing of God’s palaver, that it is very difficult to keep order at prayers. Indeed, it is hard to get silence to begin, for we have had the chapel crowded out. I am afraid they don’t take much in, at just one service. Still, it prepares the way for them to listen next time. Up till now the cases have numbered 1,651.

“The rains have just begun, and Tom is busy with his garden. On Saturday and Sunday he had a touch of liver trouble, and had to keep quiet for a couple of days. He is all right again now. I am thankful to say Mr. Graham and

I are well too. We hear some talk of Mr. Phillips coming back soon after the new year as his time will be up, but Mrs. P. is not coming, and we are very much afraid Mrs. Graham won't come either. We are waiting anxiously for this mail to hear something definite. I don't mind much if my health keeps good except that there might be so much more done. Really my health is wonderful considering everything. I feel I can't be thankful enough for it.

"We are having a hard fight here now, there are many forces of evil against us. Some of those who have been trained in the Mission are doing their very best to keep people away from us and our meetings, and trying hard to destroy and lead into sin those who do come. Still we have God on our side, and in spite of them all the work goes on. We have large meetings, good schools, and many people coming to be taught. Mr. Graham has been visiting the out-stations since I wrote last. He was very pleased with the work. He had not seen them before.

"November 23rd.—There is a great deal of opposition now to girls coming into the station, because the men find that they will not be slaves afterwards. Only those who really wish to live in a decent fashion will allow their girls to come, and even when they do there is often difficulty with their families. . . . But the conceit of these people, especially the young men and big boys, is astonishing. It is beyond measure! There is just that air about them: 'I'm as good as you.' They are not at all the poor humble negroes whom one reads about in story-books. They

are very different even from the Cameroons people in their behaviour to the white man. There is one good thing about it. I think it will be easy to develop independent, self-supporting Churches as soon as we can find people to take the leadership.

“December 16th.—You said in your last letter that there will always be a welcome for us at 34. Thank you very much for the assurance. I am afraid we shall come to claim it earlier than we had expected. We did hope to stay out another year, but Tom is sick in bed with one of his old attacks, the second he has had, and a very severe one. So we dare not risk another, and shall leave as soon as there is some one with Mr. Graham. We shall not come to England though, until May, all being well, but shall stay at Madeira, to avoid east winds, and to learn Portuguese, which we badly need here.”

On January 16, 1895, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis left San Salvador, and after a tedious voyage reached Grand Canary on March 20. There they were compelled to wait eight days, and the subsequent passage to Madeira proved frightfully rough and perilous. They arrived much knocked about, but not permanently damaged by the buffeting. Their friend Mr. Parkinson, who had called upon them at Grand Canary in the previous year, dropped in again at Funchal, and remained with them a week, to the great augmentation of their pleasure and their cheer, but whether or not to

the advantage of their projected study of the Portuguese language I cannot say.

Early in May they were in London, and found a temporary home in the near vicinity of the church which Mr. Lewis had come to regard with affection akin to that long cherished by his wife.

In the following month, Mrs. Lewis had an important interview with Mr. Baynes respecting the work of women missionaries on the Congo, and the advisability of allowing unmarried women to join the staff. She was of opinion that this should be done when the Committee had been educated to adopt right lines in the matter, concerning which her judgments were very definitely formulated. Suffice it here to say that ultimately her recommendations have been almost exactly embodied in practice.

At the end of July, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, accompanied by their niece, Miss Eva Percival, joined Mr. and the Misses Hartland at Penmaenmawr, and began a holiday in North Wales which was ever remembered with enthusiasm. Among the pious pilgrimages of this sojourn in the hill country was one to the inn at which Mrs. Lewis's father and mother spent their honeymoon, and another to the churchyard at Maentwrog where her grandparents and one of her uncles were buried.

As the year drew to its close, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis were both in the full swing of deputation work, and in a letter dated December 16th, Mrs. Lewis states that she and her husband have each had fourteen meetings at Loughborough within

one week. Their programme included a five weeks' working tour in Scotland, in the interests of the Mission; and after many labours there came a spell of strenuous rest in Switzerland, of which no other record has reached my hand than the following enthusiastic picture-postcard communication, addressed to Miss Ethel Percival:—

“Chamonix, June 9th.—Here we are in the midst of glories too big for words. Mont Blanc showed us his head yesterday. Such a sight! This morning we walked over the Glacier du Borson. Had to start by climbing a long ladder, then steps cut in the ice just big enough for one foot—woollen socks over our boots. Splendid walk there and back through pine woods smelling deliciously! Waterfalls, mountains, streams, and flowers in abundance. Love to all. Tell Eva I have got my mountain spirits on. . . . To-morrow we go to see another glacier, bigger and farther off. I go on a dear beast.”

The furlough with its manifold labours and spells of recreation which constitute the “rest and change” which missionaries come home to enjoy, wore to its close. Public and private farewells were spoken, and on Saturday, July 4th, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. White, Mr. Wherrett, and Mr. Gardiner of another mission, left London for Antwerp. Mr. Parkinson accompanied them upon this first stage of their journey. Sunday was spent in Antwerp, where they attended services at the Seamen's Church and visited St. Paul's and the Cathedral. On Monday Mr. Parkinson took the whole party to Brussels for the day, but on returning to Antwerp had to say “goodbye”

without waiting to see them off. They were sorry at the leave-taking, and would fain have had his company all the way, as I, who have had the privilege of travelling with him more than once, can well believe.

But if Mr. Parkinson did not see them off a good many other people did. Their ship was a new one, named *Albertville*, after the Crown Prince. When she loosed from the quay flags were flying, bells ringing, bands playing, all the craft in the river ablaze with bunting, and "all Antwerp" at the riverside to see the spectacle; for the Crown Prince himself had come aboard, and ten nuns and two priests bound for Africa had embarked in procession, led by two dignitaries of the Church wearing gorgeous apparel. As the *Albertville* dropped down the Scheldt "music played while His Serene Highness was pleased to eat his victuals." At Flushing the Crown Prince and the bishops left the ship with ceremonious adieux and episcopal benedictions. It was all glorious and affecting, but left somewhat to be desired. The music which cheered the Prince at his banquet failed to satisfy the cravings of hungry English missionaries, and Mrs. Lewis ruefully records in her journal that they did not get their lunch until four o'clock.

CHAPTER IX

THE BUILDING OF THE NEW CHAPEL AT SAN SALVADOR, AND OTHER MATTERS

THE voyagers reached Matadi safely on Sunday, August 2nd, and before going to San Salvador made the journey to Stanley Pool to attend meetings of the local committee. They found great refreshment in converse with their colleagues, and Mrs. Lewis wrote a long letter containing brief, kindly notes concerning every one of them. The return journey was made in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Lawson Forfeitt and included a brief but happy stay at Wathen. Mr. Forfeitt has given me an idyllic picture of a Sunday evening encampment upon a hillside, where, in ideal natural conditions, the travellers worshipped God in informal service and read together one of Dr. Maclaren's sermons. Upon reference to Mrs. Lewis's journal I find the date of this incident was August 30th, and the reading of the sermon is mentioned.

San Salvador was reached on Wednesday, September 9th, and Mr. and Mrs. Lewis forthwith settled down to their customary round of duties. In October they made a journey of visitation to the outposts, and one incident points the moral

that we appreciate our privileges when we are on the point of losing them. The people of Mawunze, among whom Vita and his wife had been working, had proved apathetic to such a degree that it was determined to withdraw Vita, for other towns were clamouring for a teacher. As soon as this decision was known all Mawunze turned out in a fit of penitence and besought that Vita might be allowed to remain, promising all manner of amendment. In the end he left for a season with the understanding that if the newly awakened ardour were maintained he should return.

In November the town of San Salvador was plunged into excitement by the sudden death of the King, following a flagrantly nefarious piece of conduct, the culmination of an evil course. To the great indignation of Mrs. Lewis and her colleagues the Resident consented to wink at the following of certain heathen and illegal customs in the observance of the obsequies. It was peculiarly painful to Mrs. Lewis that certain of her women friends and converts, wives of the deceased King, would have to sit all day long for months in a house with the corpse, never going out except at night. The only concession secured was that those who were professed Christians should be permitted to attend the services of the Mission.

Matter for discouragement and encouragement appears in the following extracts from a letter to Miss Hartland dated December 21, 1896:—

“The dreadful thing with these children is their propensity to steal. E. is just the same as D., and so are L. and M. at the other houses. We have tried everything with them—admonition,

punishments of various kinds—but nothing has any effect. Can you suggest a remedy? We have even bribed, but to no purpose. Steal they will, and some of them ‘lie on the top.’ If any one has doubts about ‘original sin’ let him come here!

“E. is a regular Topsy. She informed Mrs. Graham once, who was trying to talk to her seriously, that she didn’t want to go to heaven; she should prefer going to the other place. Isn’t it dreadful? What are you to do with a child like that? One of Mr. Hawker’s sweet little angels of seven!!! None of the black children would *say* that, though they *do* just as bad things. She is a mulatto. I do hope she may be converted, for she is very pretty, unfortunately for her, and what will become of her I can’t think. She can read nicely, but is not very clever otherwise. . . . You will be glad to know that the chief of Mbanza Mputu refused to apply for the throne here after the death of the King, because it would entail his becoming a Roman Catholic. I think it was a fine evidence of sincerity, for he was really the rightful heir. . . . Another thing you will be interested to hear. When we were at Mbanza Mputu a fortnight ago, Matata brought a man to Tom, saying he came from his town of Bangu (near the Arthington Falls, you know), and he wanted to come to learn more about God’s palaver. When Tom began to ask him questions, it turned out that he first heard the Gospel from John [Hartland] when he went to the falls with Matata, and that he was sent up to Manyanga with a message when John was ill there. He seems a very hopeful inquirer, and thus the seed sown so many years

ago seems to be bearing fruit now. It is an encouragement, too, to us, as one never knows how even one visit to a town may be the means of awakening some hearers to a sense of their need."

Early in the year 1897, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis were again engaged in visiting the out-stations. In April San Salvador is visited by mumps, in epidemic form, and Mrs. Lewis contracts the disease in the course of her work among the people. About this time she is filled with sorrow by the death of Mr. Pople at Tumba; and, two months later, she and all friends of the Mission are again plunged into mourning by the death of Mr. White at Yakusu. In July she is away at Nkoko, concerned in the appointment of a new teacher—Manwana, one of their first boys. And in the following month mention is made of the undertaking which gives the title to this chapter.

"August 18th. (To Miss Ethel Percival.)—In San Salvador the sickness is dreadful, and hardly a day passes without a death. Uncle and Mr. Phillips are continually at funerals, and we don't hear of all those who are buried by the Padres, or in country fashion as heathens. The Catholics are beginning to restore the old cathedral.¹ I am sorry, as they have spoilt the beautiful ruins—the only pretty thing in the place. And they won't do it properly. It will be a very small, insignificant place when it is finished. Of course it is to save trouble, for one thing, as some of the walls are already there. We hope to build our new chapel next dry season, all being well. Uncle is busy with plans now. That will be very

¹ See Appendix, Note D.

much larger. By the way, you would love our cat! She has two dear little kittens. She had five—but—I draw a curtain! These two are sweet! Sandy we shall keep; Tiger goes to Mrs. P. But Mrs. Tabitha is nearly human in the way she goes on. We put her in the medicine-room on the piazza at night; but as soon as our door is open in the morning she carries her two babies to their day nursery in our bedroom. She much regrets that they are not allowed there at night, and protested loudly when we came home, for she had been allowed to keep house in our absence. She likes to be near us, though she does not like being nursed."

Early in October Mrs. Lewis reports the glad and ceremonial welcome accorded to a new colleague, Mr. Adams, and a journey of itineration in which she and Mr. Lewis were accompanied by him. A striking incident occurred in the course of this tour. As they were on the point of leaving one town certain women came and laid a bundle of fetishes before her, saying, "Here are the things which tempt us." She had not spoken of fetishes, but they had made practical application of her words.

"November 25th.—I think I told you that the Resident and priests were starting to rebuild the cathedral. They laid the foundation-stone, with their names on it, and built very thick stone walls. But a few days ago, lo, and behold, in the walls appeared two great cracks, and the workmen were sent off in a great hurry lest the whole thing should collapse upon the top of them. They had built above rotten graves and without sufficient

foundation. So it is left now, and I very much doubt if it will ever get finished. The King and the people are rather wild because the priests have been forcing them to pay for it, taking a part of the King's monthly allowance. They have just managed to spoil the beauty of the old ruins, though. By the way, one of you speaks about the future King being in our school. He was in our school; but as soon as he was appointed to be King he was taken away to stay with the Resident, treated like one of themselves, and sent to the Padres' school. Now he has been sent to school at Loanda, and they say in a little while he will go to Portugal. He was perfectly spoilt before he left here. He will learn at Loanda every conceivable kind of wickedness. So I am afraid he is more likely to be a curse than a blessing when he returns. However, 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' We must trust that in some way things will be overruled for good."

Some weeks after the foregoing paragraphs were written, the tottering walls of the new cathedral crashed down in a storm.

"December 26th.—The new chapel is not yet in process of building. We are only getting things ready. The collection is coming in well this year, and we hope to be quite prepared to commence the work at the beginning of the dry season, next May. Tom is architect, and I suppose will be builder also. It will be a big job."

"February 7th. (To Miss Ethel Percival.)—Things go on much the same here. It is really difficult to write about anything.

"We have been reading in odd times a book



SAN SALVADOR: RUINS OF ANCIENT PORTUGUESE CATHEDRAL.

called 'The Sowers,' by the author of the 'Tents of Kedar.' It is good and rather exciting, but it takes us a long time to get through a book unless we are ill. Did I tell you that Uncle is busy building a dispensary among other things? It will be a nice little building when finished—one side for men and the other for women, which latter will be my domain, so I am watching it with great interest. At present I have to dispense from our own house, which takes up room, moreover the smell is not always pleasant. If you were to see some of the awful sores I don't know what you would say! I think I told you the Resident's wife has a baby. He is six months old now, and I nurse him occasionally. He is a dear. I am his medical attendant. The moment anything is the matter with him they send off for me. Poor little chap, it's hard on a baby here, though the Portuguese don't feel it as we do."

"March 27th.—What will you say when I tell you there is every likelihood of our leaving San Salvador and going to plant a new station? For a long time Mr. Bentley has had a scheme on foot for placing a new station in a district some eighty miles N.E. from here called Zombo. It is very populous and is a great trading centre. The people speak nearly the same language as here so books, &c., would be all ready. At first there were obstacles in the way, but we are all agreed now as to the advisability of the plan. There is nothing definitely settled yet, but we hear that Mr. Baynes is in favour of it, and that if the Committee agree, we shall be going there with

John Pinnock, as we and he have offered. It will be nice to have him for a colleague, as we shall all be from Camden, and the station will be a memorial to Tom Comber. I hope that Camden folks will feel a special interest in it from the first. Tom and I hope to go there in June to see the place and people, and to study the prospects generally. Sometimes some people from Zombo come here as carriers, otherwise there has been no evangelistic work done there. Mr. Bentley paid a visit there two or three years ago, and Mr. Phillips made a rush to one town when we were at home. The district is under Portuguese rule, and there is a Resident, and a Portuguese trader who used to be here. But it is a very large district with room for no end of work. The priests have not gone there yet. I wonder if they will follow. It will be beginning again quite at the beginning and we shall be farther away from civilisation even than here; but by means of the railway we shall be able to get to Matadi in case of need in about the same time as from San Salvador, for Tumba is about as far from Zombo as we are, and then there is only a day's journey in the train. When we go there I shall be able to tell you all about it; until then this is all I know. Tom is busy with the new chapel and it is getting on fast. He hopes to finish that work before we leave permanently. Of course we shall regret leaving here for many things, but we wish to go there very much and shall be very disappointed if anything prevents now. Well, these are our plans, but the future is in God's hands, and He will order

everything for the extension of His Kingdom in this dark land."

"April 11th. (A circular letter.)—I expect you will be looking for another letter from me by now, so I am writing to tell you about the commencement of our new chapel. For eleven years we have met in a house made entirely of native materials with a mud floor. It has been repaired a great many times, and now shows signs that it will not last much longer. We have been collecting money for the erection of a new permanent chapel for the last four years, each New Year's collection being set apart for that purpose. At the beginning of this year the people made a great effort, and brought a larger amount than in any previous year, so that we felt justified in beginning to build. We hope by the end of this year to have enough to complete it, as it must be opened free of debt. Mr. Lewis undertook the task of planning and directing the work, and much time and labour it cost him, for you must remember that we have no really skilled workmen. There are one or two pretty fair bricklayers, but they can build nothing more elaborate than a plain square wall. Many of the tools, too, he has had to make himself, in the smithy. Mr. Lewis drew up a plan and decided to build a stone chapel capable of seating five hundred comfortably. The next thing was to get the stones. There was an old ruined wall, a part of the old monastery, which was getting dangerous to passers-by, so that came down and supplied a good many; then there is the old stone house which the first missionaries built now fast going to ruin, that is supplying a good many more.

All the large stones in and about the station were gathered together, and then the builders began to make the foundations. It occurred to us that it would be nice to have a stone-laying ceremony. Something that would draw the people together, make them feel that it was their work, and give them something to look back upon in years to come. To-day the great event has taken place and I am sure it will be a red-letter day in the lives of many. I have never seen them so thoroughly interested in anything.

"It was decided that Mrs. Phillips and I should each have the honour of laying a memorial stone. Mr. Lewis and his men chose two nice grey stones, upon which he cut our initials and the date of laying. He also made two pretty little new trowels, and got everything ready and fitted for this morning's ceremony.

"Mr. Phillips, too, was busy. He composed a special hymn and tune, and taught the people to sing it. He also got programmes printed, sufficient to give to all who could read. Meanwhile the people had not been idle. Down at the bottom of the hill is a little stream where there are very fine grey stones. We asked every one to bring a stone, and every day some people were to be seen going down to fetch them, until yesterday there was hardly a house from which any one came to our Mission, but there lay one or more stones outside it, waiting for the morrow. Yesterday morning after service, when Mr. Lewis announced the meeting of to-day, to our surprise the people burst out in loud applause, round after round of clapping, and it was some time before we could

get sufficient quiet to dismiss them. Just now it is the middle of the wet season, so we were a little anxious about the weather. We were greatly rejoiced this morning to find a beautiful bright sunshiny day with a pleasant breeze keeping it a little cool. Every one was astir early, and at half-past eight the bell rang and we five missionaries all went over to the site of the new chapel. Then from all directions came women and girls carrying stones on their heads. Now came one with a stone balanced on her head, a baby tied on her back, and a bunch of beads (Congo money) in her hand; then a little mite of a child with a stone clutched tight with both hands, then women and girls of all sorts and sizes down to the tiny tots in the infants' class, but each with her stone, which was deposited in front of the missionaries. Soon from a little distance came the strains of a hymn, boys' and men's voices joining in singing 'All hail the power of Jesus' name' in the Congo language, and as we looked we saw a long procession of men and boys, each carrying a stone, coming from the opposite direction, Mr. Adams, who had arranged this little incident, bringing up the rear. As they reached the place each put down his stone, and then all stood round singing lustily till the hymn was finished. By this time fully five hundred people were gathered together. Quiet was called for, and the service began with a short prayer by Mr. Lewis, then a hymn which was heartily sung, Mr. Phillips presiding at the harmonium. Mr. Lewis read a few verses telling how Solomon prepared to build the temple, Mr. Phillips spoke about the history of the Mission from

the time Messrs. Grenfell and Comber came here in 1878—when they used to meet under the old tree in the palaver ground—up till now, and drew some lessons from it. Then came the ceremony: Mr. Lewis presented me with the trowel, helped me to lay the stone, did the same for Mrs. Phillips, and we declared them ‘Well and truly laid to the glory of God.’ Behind each stone was deposited a sealed bottle containing the current number of our magazine, which gives an account of the formation and growth of the Church here, with full details of the station, staff, native teachers, &c., also a programme of to-day’s proceedings. After the stone-laying, freewill offerings were laid upon them; a great number of people pressed forward with beads and cloth, one woman with a live fowl, and others with papers giving part of their wages. Then Mr. Lewis offered prayer, asking God’s blessing on all, and His help to complete the work, so that in years to come, when all we shall have passed away, many may meet within its walls to hear the good news of a Father’s and a Saviour’s love. Then with all our hearts and voices we sang a translation of ‘O’er the gloomy hills of darkness’ to old ‘Calcutta.’ Mr. Adams pronounced the Benediction, and we all dispersed after the scene had been photographed.

“At the end of next month my husband and I hope to start on a long journey to a country where no missionary has been before. We expect to be away many weeks, so you will not hear from me for some little time probably. I shall hope to write and tell you about it on our return. Meanwhile will you pray for us that God may give us

favour in the sight of the people and lead us to a place which may become another centre of light in this dark land."

"May 19th.—There has been quite a smallpox scare in this town. There have been eight cases, all at the same time. A house has been built outside the town to accommodate them. There have been no fresh cases for about ten days now, so we hope it is over; but the people are so foolish. Although they are terribly afraid of it, yet they will not take any precautions, and hide cases if they possibly can. We have had to be very careful with the children in the station, not allowing them to go visiting in the town, and we have stopped inquirers and others coming from other towns, so as not to spread the mischief. Tom actually found the King hiding a boy with it in his house. Of course he sent him at once to the Resident.

"The new chapel is getting on slowly. Tom's illness has not helped it. Next week, if well, we shall be very busy. Going away for so long and not knowing exactly whither we go is a big job, and we shall need to take a great many things with us."

"August 4th.—The girls' school flourishes exceedingly, and now we are getting all the little children, the children of those we taught in years gone by. It is so nice to see the little tots coming in, and they really like coming, and of course will be able to learn so much more than those who have only two or three years to learn in and who in many cases are working hard all day. We have ninety-two girls on the books. If we go away I hope

they will send another man and his wife out here. Of course at Zombo we shall not need another lady just yet, as the work will be very gradual there. At first we shall have to gain the confidence of the people and that will take some time."

In June Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, with some of their boys, made the eventful journey to Zombo, which will be fully described in a later chapter. After notable adventures, they arrived back safely at San Salvador on July 6th, and took up their customary work again. For many months, however, the chapel building was a matter of commanding interest, and for Mr. Lewis a matter of heavy labour and multiplied anxieties. His wife's letters teem with lively and sympathetic references to his trials. His workmen, imperfectly skilled, need constant supervision. It is passing difficult to induce them to take an interest in doing things well. Their invincible propensity to "jabber" while at work leads them to make mistakes which necessitate the pulling down again of that which they have built up, and all this with the rainy season imminent, making it a matter of moment that the stone-laying should be swiftly done. When it comes to constructing the arches for doors and windows, she fears that Mr. Lewis will have much trouble in teaching his craftsmen, for no one in San Salvador has made an arch before. Yet in spite of all drawbacks, the work goes on.

Meanwhile they await long and anxiously the final consent of the Committee to the Zombo Scheme.

Early in April, 1899, Mrs. Lewis reports with joy

that the desired consent has been received, and gives account of the progress of the building.

"The chapel will look fine when it is finished. The roof is nearly on. It is a year to-day, counting by Easter and not by the date, since the stones were laid. By the way, we missionaries, the Grahams, the Phillipses, and ourselves are paying for the pulpit and the baptistery, and building them in memory of those who have gone. We intend to affix a brass plate recording that they are erected in memory of Tom and Minnie Comber, John S. Hartland, A. Cowe, S. Silvey, and Wilkinson. We thought it would be good for the natives not to forget those who have worked and died for them."

Before the month of April closed an event occurred which plunged the Mission into deepest sorrow. Here follows the account written by Mrs. Lewis and addressed to Mr. Baynes.

"All last week Mrs. Phillips was very unwell, and caused us some anxiety, and on Sunday, the 23rd inst., fever appeared, which continued in spite of all efforts to subdue it. Mrs. Phillips was much worse on Tuesday, and we began to fear for her: from that time until Wednesday afternoon we did everything we could think of, but, although we were able to allay the distressing symptoms, the inward fever remained, and at 1.45 p.m., on April 26th, she passed peacefully away. Mrs. Phillips was conscious to within an hour of her death, a fact for which she was very thankful, and so are we. She was able to speak to us words of faith and hope, and to send loving messages to all the dear ones at home, and to the women and children

here. At first she was grieved at the thought of not seeing her little ones again, and at the thought of their childish sorrow when they should learn that mother would come home no more. But even that passed, and she was able to leave them in the care of the Heavenly Father. She had taken such an interest in the building of the new chapel, and the day before she died asked if it was possible for her to go to look at it. On Wednesday, when Mr. Lewis came into the room, she said: 'Ah! I shall never see the bonny chapel after all!' She spoke, too, of the work to which we hope to go in Zombo, and said she thought she should see us there, and hoped we should have great blessing, and was so grateful for every little thing done for her, and was brave and unselfish to the last.

"When it became known how ill Mrs. Phillips was the greatest concern was evinced by the people. None of the women went to their farms, but sat and watched outside the house. When all was over, and she lay as in a peaceful sleep, with white English roses scattered around, the women came in to take a last look at their friend; they burst out into the terrible death wail, but when we asked them to desist they stopped, and nothing could have shown the sorrow and sympathy so much as the absolute quiet that reigned through all that sad day and the day following. The people all—men, women, and children—did their very utmost to show their love and respect. They cleared the path to the chapel and to the cemetery, and the next morning, when six of the station boys carried the coffin into the chapel, it was through two

long rows of mourners that we passed. Mr. Lewis conducted a short service and gave a brief address, and all that day a crowd of women sat round the coffin until four in the afternoon, when the funeral took place in the cemetery on the outskirts of the town. Every one was most kind. The Resident, the Padres, and the representatives of the trading houses all came, the Padres even offering their band. Such a funeral has never been seen in Congo before, and all the way to the grave and back again the most reverent silence. Before starting we sang a translation of the hymn, 'Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,' and at the grave, 'Abide with me,' and then we left our sister asleep in Jesus until the day break and the shadows flee away.

"Mrs. Phillips was one of those quiet, unobtrusive workers whose work is not much known or appreciated, but we who have been her fellow-workers for more than ten years know how real was her love for the work, and how often in great weariness and pain she did her utmost to bring the women and children to the feet of Jesus. For the last two years she had very few interruptions from illness, and has been able to work continuously with me in the school and other parts of the work, especially in the Sunday School, taking the oversight of the girls' department, and holding a female teachers' preparation class. Our hearts are sad for her husband and the dear little motherless children as well as the parents and other friends in the homeland. May the loving Heavenly Father be very near to sustain them when this news reaches them.

"We mourn, too, for ourselves and the work here. We have lost a kind and unselfish colleague and the women's work a true friend and helper. Who is to take her place? If you could have seen the sympathy and sorrow shown yesterday; if you could have watched the devotion of Mrs. Phillips's eldest girl during her illness and all through this sad time; if you could have heard the prayers offered by the women this evening, when we met in our weekly prayer-meeting—prayers for the friends at home, for us who are left, and for themselves in their own sad loss—you would have felt as I did that our work has not been in vain, and that the Congo women are priceless jewels to be won for the Saviour's crown. You know that I am hoping to go further afield, and work among the women of Zombo. I would earnestly beg the Committee to send some one to help Mrs. Graham in this work. We are so short-handed here; we want more workers, both men and women, to do for these people what they cannot do for themselves. They are willing to work, but they need teaching and guiding, and we must have more workers among the women. These Congo women, with a large amount of personal freedom and strong will, must become a power for good if only they are led aright. The fields are white unto harvest, the time is short, and the workers swiftly pass away. May the Lord thrust forth more labourers into His harvest."

On June 7th Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, accompanied by Mr. John Pinnock, started again for Kibokolo, the journey occupying nearly a fortnight. They

succeeded in securing a plot of ground, and before they left, six days later, the Comber Memorial station was commenced. Mr. Pinnock remained to proceed with the necessary building, while Mr. and Mrs. Lewis returned to San Salvador for the short closing period of their work in that town. They arrived back on July 5th; the chapel building work was duly completed, and on Saturday, September 16th, and following days, the opening ceremonies took place. Mrs. Lewis's report of the celebrations will constitute the next chapter.

CHAPTER X

THE OPENING OF THE NEW CHAPEL AT SAN SALVADOR. SEPTEMBER, 1899

THE following account of the opening of the new chapel at San Salvador, and the detailed reports of two public meetings, were written by Mrs. Lewis. The reader will, of course, remember that the speeches reported were delivered in the Congo language, and that Mrs. Lewis translates as well as reports. I have thought it worth while to print these documents, believing that they will convey more vivid and convincing impressions of missionary success than many pages of abstract exposition.

“We have just finished the opening services of the new chapel at San Salvador, and a splendid time we had; one which we hope will have good results in days and years to come. More than two hundred people from the surrounding towns gave notice that they intended to be present. So we formed a hospitality committee consisting of the deacons, with Mr. Phillips and myself; and on the Wednesday after the service, we took the names of those willing to entertain strangers, while native mats were put down in the old chapel

for any men who failed to find accommodation elsewhere. Of such there were very few. Indeed, the difficulty was to provide visitors for all who wished to receive them. Hospitality was offered for four days without any expense to the Mission. A great many brought 'chop' themselves, and whatever else was required was freely given by the people here, with a little help from the missionaries themselves, in the form of beef.

"All Saturday we were as busy as we possibly could be; Mr. Phillips and I receiving our visitors and sending them to their respective hosts; Mr. Lewis with Messrs. Beedham and Pinnock putting the finishing touches to the new chapel. At four o'clock all was ready, and a crowd waiting outside which rushed in as soon as the doors were opened. We, that is Mr. P. and his choir, consisting of the boys and girls on the station and us three ladies, took our seats and sang for nearly half an hour before each service commenced, which had a little effect in quieting the noise. Mr. Phillips presided at this first meeting. Prayer was led by two natives, one man and one woman, an address was given by Mr. Phillips, and a welcome proffered to the missionaries new and returned—Nekaka welcoming them on behalf of the men, and Mbwanzi on behalf of the women. It was really wonderful how well they did it, shaking hands with the missionaries afterward. Mr. and Mrs. Graham responded, as the others could not speak Kongo. The chapel looked beautiful, and every one was delighted. Mrs. Beedham had prepared three texts, which were hung severally behind the pulpit and on each side of the chapel: 'Enter into

His gates with thanksgiving'; 'The Lord has been mindful of us'; 'He will bless us.'

"On Sunday morning there were some six or seven hundred present at nine o'clock, when Mr. Pinnock conducted a children's service, and gave a capital address from 'Knock.' At eleven o'clock Mr. Lewis conducted the usual meeting, when the place was crowded, about eight hundred being present. He preached from the text 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.' At half-past two p.m., there was a gathering of between four and five hundred women. We had such a good meeting—Mrs. Graham prayed, Mrs. Beedham gave out the hymns, and I gave an address from 'He appeared first unto Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.' The attention and behaviour were really wonderful, seeing that many had never been to service in a building before. It was a gathering such as is rarely seen in Africa, and far exceeded our expectations. In the evening at five o'clock Mr. Graham preached to an audience of men only, some three hundred being present, on the 'whole armour of God.' When in the evening we nine missionaries met together for our little English service, our hearts were indeed full of joy and thankfulness.

"On Monday morning all was again excitement, for this was the great meeting, and long before we were ready a big crowd was waiting outside, and Messrs. Pinnock and Beedham had as much as they could do to prevent the people from tumbling over one another. The speakers and choir were already seated, and Mr. Bowskill with four cameras was taking pictures all the time. Mr.

Lewis was in the chair, and we had a most interesting meeting, of which I enclose a report. It was really marvellous at all the meetings to see how well the natives, both men and women, acquitted themselves. Some of their speeches would not have disgraced Exeter Hall; they were so much to the point and so well put. Nlekai's was the best in this meeting, but all were good. We had a time limit of ten minutes for natives, and five for missionaries, and the gong kept them up to it. The meeting lasted for two hours and a half and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

"In the afternoon there were many people to see the children, who played games in the station, Mrs. Graham helping them to enjoy themselves, and after tea we all went over again to the chapel for the service of song, based on the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' which Mr. Phillips had taken much trouble to prepare. We were rather afraid that some accident might happen, as so many strangers came. The place was crammed to its utmost capacity. Fully one thousand must have been present. But Mr. Lewis told them at the beginning, it was a service, not a play, and asked for good behaviour, and got it. The King was present, and when his photo was put on the sheet we allowed the audience to clap. But during the service the attention was as good and reverent as we could wish. All went off well, Mr. Lewis reading and Mr. Graham showing the pictures, while Mr. Phillips and Mr. Pinnock accompanied, Mr. Phillips leading. It reminded me of old days when we sang the same service with Mr. Charlier at Camden.

“The next morning (Tuesday) some of the strangers left to return to their towns, so that the attendance at the missionary meeting was not quite so large. But there were about six hundred present, and a most delightful meeting we had. The speeches were all good, and that of Lau was universally acknowledged to be the best in all the meetings. It was really wonderful to hear this woman, who can neither read nor write, stand up and speak as if her address had all been prepared, with not one word too much. Vita and Elembe, our old boys, now teachers in other towns, spoke also very well, and then Mr. Phillips gave an address, bidding *us* goodbye, after which we all three replied, and the meeting closed with singing ‘God be with you till we meet again.’

“In the afternoon the whole Church gathered together to commemorate our Lord’s death, when three new members were received, two from here and one, Luvumbu, a Zombo native—who was converted while working with Mr. Pinnock at Tumba—the first-fruits of Zombo for Christ. Mr. Graham presided. The following afternoon Mr. Pinnock baptized these three.

“And so ended a memorable time in the history of the San Salvador Church—a time to which we shall look back joyfully, with thankfulness that thus God has permitted us to see the result of our labours, with prayer that He may richly bless the native Church meeting in this new and beautiful house, and that in many an instance. ‘The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there.’



SAN SALVADOR. OLD SCHOOL-CHAPEL.



SAN SALVADOR. NEW CHAPEL.

“MEETING HELD ON MONDAY MORNING.

“The Chairman, the Rev. T. Lewis, said how great a pleasure it was to them to meet in this new house of God. When they began to build, many people thought they would not be able to finish, but by the blessing of God they were meeting there to-day. He wanted to thank all who had helped in this work, the bricklayers and the carpenters, those who had carried stones, and the labourers and children who had carried water. Some had worked very, very slowly, and they knew that sometimes he had had palavers with them about their slowness and carelessness. Now he hoped all these things would be forgotten. The work was finished, and to-day they were meeting to rejoice together.

“They remembered three who had begun the work with them, whom God had called in the middle of it—Makaya, Mponda, and William. But they had hope in their deaths that they believed on Jesus Christ, and trusted they were now with Him. He would say to the workmen just one thing. Let them take care lest any of those who had helped to build this house failed to enter into the house God had built above. The workmen who built the ark perished because of their unbelief. Let them make sure that they had entered into the kingdom now, by faith in Christ, lest they should be left outside the Holy City at last.

“He then introduced Mantu Parkinson, who was the first native baptized. Mantu recalled the time when the old King of Kongo received

a letter from Mr. Comber, saying that he and his companions were down at Mosuca. He was a very little boy then, but he remembered the excitement of the day when Mr. Comber arrived with his wife and Messrs. Bentley, Hartland, and Crudgington; how the people wondered what they had come for, whether for rubber or slaves. Then soon after they heard that Mrs. Comber was sick, and the big people went to see her day by day, till one day they saw all the white men crying, and heard that she was dead. There was a great cry in the town, and he was among those who followed her to the grave. And though he could not understand what they said, he and others began to wonder what it might all mean. He spoke of several incidents which occurred in Congo, and then of his visit to England, and of many things he saw there. Especially he recalled a remark made to him by the Rev. Francis Tucker, of Camden Road, that God had remembered Congoland and sent them His Word. When he returned with Mr. Comber he often thought of those words, and he was reminded of them again this morning, when he saw the text on the wall, 'The Lord hath been mindful of us.' Those words and the teaching he afterwards received brought him to Christ, and he was baptized.

“Nlekai, teacher in charge of an outstation, was one of the first five who formed the Church, December 2, 1887. He said he was a native of Bangu, Arthington Falls. He was a very little boy and couldn't understand much when Mr. Comber first came to Congo. But he remembered one day when there was a great noise in his town

and Messrs. Comber and Hartland arrived, and all the people gathered together to hear them preach. Some of the other boys went back with them, but he was left. A short time afterwards Mr. Dixon visited his town, and after he had preached, asked the chief for some boys to go back with him. Then Nlekai was sent with others. Soon afterwards Mr. Dixon left San Salvador, and he became Mr. Weeks's boy. With him he went to England. While there he went about and saw many people, and went every Sunday to a big house where they taught the people (the Metropolitan Tabernacle). And the people were constantly asking Mr. Weeks 'Is your boy a Christian?' And Mr. Weeks used to answer, 'I do not know, perhaps he is!' And he asked himself what they could mean. 'Of course I am a Christian. I have not done any bad palavers, I have always washed the dishes properly.' He thought very much about this till he came back to Congo, when from the words spoken by the teachers there he began to see that a Christian means some one who believes in Christ. Then Mr. Lewis came, and soon after he was baptized, and Mr. Lewis taught them they must join together to work, and they began to go into the other towns and tell the people there about the gospel. He finished by an appeal to all to come to Christ, and then to help in the work.

"The Rev. R. H. C. Graham next spoke. He said that when in England many people tried to dissuade him from returning to Congo. They said the Congos were too lazy to learn to work, and even if they professed to believe in Christ it was only with their mouths. Even many Christian

people said, 'You had better stay at home and teach the people here.' But when they heard about this house which they were building and saw the photos of it which had been sent home; when they heard that it was being built by native workmen, they said, 'Truly your work is not in vain.' He then referred to having seen Mr. Dixon, and said how pleased he and Mr. Crudgington would have been had they been present to-day.

"Wavatidi was the next speaker. She, and another, now dead, were the first women baptized in 1888. She said she remembered the day that Mantu was baptized. She, with some other women, went down to the water to wash and saw Mr. Comber baptize Mantu. They thought to themselves, 'What is this palaver? What can be the use of it?' Then she heard many palavers, and soon after that Mrs. Lewis came, and then she began to be taught properly, and learnt to love Christ. When she and Mpuna went to the King, their husband, to ask permission to be baptized, he was very angry and threatened to shoot them. But Padre Barosa interfered, telling the King that baptism was a very good palaver, and he must let his wives be baptized if they wished. She then spoke of how she first went to school and tried to learn to read, and how Mpuna, who had been baptized with her, had been called home.

"Mata, who has been chief capita since the beginning of the Mission, spoke of those who first came to Congo and of the journeys that he took with them, especially of the time when he went to Stanley Pool with Messrs. Bentley and Crudgington, telling some wonderful 'crocodile' tales,

and also some Congo parables quite incomprehensible to any European.

“The Rev. H. Ross Phillips said his part was to look after the money, so that his speech would be about that. First he read out a list of special contributions from the natives amounting in all to the value of 578 francs. He then mentioned that the missionaries at present on the staff had presented the pulpit and baptistery, with a brass plate in memory of those who had been on the San Salvador staff, but were now dead, and spoke briefly of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Comber, Mr. Hartland, Mr. Silvey, Mr. Cowe, Mr. Wilkinson, and his own wife. He also said that Mr. and Mrs. Lawson Forfeitt had promised chairs for the platform, and that he and his children would give a communion table and desk in memory of Mrs. Phillips. He spoke of how the work had grown since he came first to San Salvador, pointing out the next speaker as an example to the men, he having learnt to read when grown up, and being now able to preach to others.

“Ndonzwau, a deacon from an outside town, remembered the time when he was in darkness. Nlekai talked to him and taught him to read; and now that the white man had brought the gospel to them it was their duty to take it to others.

“At the missionary and farewell meeting held on Tuesday morning, Mr. Phillips presided, and after prayer and singing called on Elembe, who had a bad foot and occupied a chair on the platform. Elembe, who is teacher at Kimpese, said he was sorry he could not say much as he was not well enough to stand up. They all saw great

joy in meeting in that new house, but they must remember it was not built for them just to sit down and enjoy themselves. They must remember it was their duty to go about and teach the people in other towns. There were many towns begging for teachers. But very many people did not like to leave San Salvador. They wanted to sit down in their houses and be comfortable there. To-day they saw how their teachers who were in the pulpit had finished building this beautiful house, how they had a nice station here; but they were going to leave all these good things for the sake of preaching the gospel to the people in Zombo. This was an example for them.

“Lau, the senior woman deacon, said she remembered so many things that if she were to speak of them all they would never get out of that place. She remembered the time when the first white men¹ came to San Salvador and went to see the King, who was ill with smallpox, and gave him medicine which by the blessing of God was a help to him. Those white men said they had come after some stray goats, but truly those who followed had come to seek the sheep who had gone astray. She remembered the coming of the first missionaries and of their present teachers. She remembered the baptism of the first two women, and how, very soon after that, she and two others professed their faith in the same way, and ever since Mr. and Mrs. Lewis had taught them well, both men and women. She wanted to thank Mr. Lewis for building that chapel. They looked at its strong walls, thick roof, but they

¹ See Appendix, Note E.

knew they could never have built it had it not been for Mr. Lewis and the help of God. Let them remember all that their teachers had left for their sakes, their good country, their friends and families. Nengwa (Mrs. Graham), who had just arrived, had left a little crawling baby. Why was that? For their sakes and the gospel's. And now those in the pulpit were going farther on to preach to people who were still in darkness. They saw much sorrow at their leaving, but should not forget them, always remembering them in prayer, and when they met together in that beautiful house.

"Mr. Phillips here said Lau had reminded them of something they had omitted, viz., to thank Mr. Lewis for all the trouble he had taken in the building of that chapel. Many a time after the workmen had left Mr. Lewis had been busy all the evening till late planning and arranging, and if he had not been here, it could not have been built. He therefore proposed they should thank Mr. Lewis heartily for all his trouble. This was vigorously acceded to by clapping of hands.

"Vita, teacher at Mwingu, spoke next. He said he was a native of Bangu, and when Mr. Dixon went there to ask for schoolboys many of the people thought he wanted them to sell, but he, Vita, thought, 'If I go with the white man I shall learn to get rich like him.' Since then he had learnt that the missionaries came not to get money but to teach them about God, and they left their friends and all their good things behind, for their sakes. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis had brought him up, and he was very sorry to lose them, but he knew

it was to preach the gospel in Zombo they were going. They were leaving their nice house on the station. So they must all try to do the same, and be willing to go anywhere to lighten the darkness all around.

"The Chairman, the Rev. H. R. Phillips, spoke of the long time he and Mr. Graham and Mr. Lewis and their wives had worked together happily, so that there was joy and sorrow in his heart that day—sorrow because they were now to part, gladness because the people in Zombo were going to hear the good news of salvation. He remembered how his wife on her death-bed spoke of the Zombo work, and prayed God to bless it. They all knew Mr. Pinnock's work at Underhill and Tumba, and they hoped that God would greatly bless the work in Zombo, until there, too, there might be a chapel like this, and numbers of those who loved and followed Christ. He concluded by wishing them goodbye and Godspeed.

"The Rev. T. Lewis said he was there just to say goodbye. They all knew he was not going away because he wished to leave them or the work there, or because he wanted to part from his colleagues, but only so that he and his wife might go to Zombo and take the gospel to the people there. He thanked those present for their kindness to him while he had been with them, and would now simply say, 'Sala Kiambote' (Congo, 'goodbye,' *lit.* remain good).

"Mrs. Lewis said she remembered being at the farewell meeting of those who first came to Congo. Mr. Pinnock was present also. She went out to Africa and worked for a short time with Mr. Comber's

sister. She remembered the first day she arrived in San Salvador and the welcome the women gave her, and ever since then they had loved each other. Two especially she thought of that day whom God had called : one Mansonso, who started the work at Nkaba, although she could not read and did not know much ; the other [Mrs. Phillips], her fellow-worker among the women who had so recently passed away. Some there were her children in the faith, and she had tried to teach them all the gospel, and to show them good fashions for Christian women. Now they were to part, and she had much sorrow because of that. Yet she was glad to go to Zombo, because they in Congo had other teachers now just arrived, but the women in Zombo had none. They should not forget one another, but should pray for one another very often, and then if they loved and followed Jesus here, they would meet one day before the face of God.

“The Rev. J. Pinnock began by saying he couldn’t speak, but would try. Many of the men there had given him plenty of trouble down at Underhill, grumbling about their loads. He would ask them not to trouble the missionaries who were there now, but to try and do their work cheerfully. He was very glad to go to Zombo, so wished them goodbye and God’s blessing on the work at San Salvador.’

CHAPTER XI

PIONEERING IN ZOMBO : PERILS AND PROVIDENCES.
1898-1899

HITHERTO the events recorded in this book have been arranged, more or less strictly, in chronological order. At this point I consult my own convenience and that of the reader by slight departure from the order of time, and group together in one chapter the facts concerning the initiation of the work in Kibokolo, Zombo. The story is one of the romances of the Baptist Mission, and an illustration of the manner in which Providence ordains that events, seemingly adverse, shall subserve the progress of the good cause. Upon their first visit to Kibokolo Mr. and Mrs. Lewis endured indescribable insult, were riotously mobbed, threatened with death, and probably only saved from it by calm fearlessness, which inspired their persecutors with a secret awe. On their return journey, Mr. Lewis was enabled to render signal friendly service to certain fellow-townsmen of the people who had driven him and his wife away, and foresaw that good might come of it. A few months later a deputation arrived in San Salvador and begged him to come and settle as a

friend among the people who had' been thirsty for his blood. With her own pen Mrs. Lewis wrote a journal, extending to sixty pages, of the first pioneering journey, made in June, 1898. Unfortunately that is lost. But happily a vivid account written by Mr. Lewis is available, and I give the story as he wrote it and as it appeared in the pages of the *Missionary Herald*.

“Many of the friends at home have been already interested in the proposal to establish a Comber Memorial Station in the Zombo country, in memory of that devoted family who have laid down their lives in the service of Christ in Africa. The wonderful story of the labours of the brethren and sisters who bore that noble name, with their whole-hearted devotion to the Congo Mission, is to us who are now on the field much more than a memory—it is an inspiration to go forward in the same work, and fills us with hope for the future, knowing that their labours and ours cannot be in vain in the Lord. How Thomas Comber and the rest of them would rejoice with us to-day were they permitted to gather in the ripened fruit of their early toil in this land; and how they would hail with delight the prospect of carrying forward the banner of the Cross right into the long-neglected country of the Zombos. We have already gathered in some of Christ's lambs at Makuta, where Thomas Comber was shot at and wounded on that memorable journey when he and John Hartland had to abandon their project of making that their route to the Upper Congo. Now the country is open for us to penetrate much further into that dark region, and we

can see God's finger clearly directing us to go forward and possess the land in the name of the Saviour of the whole world. To us it seems peculiarly fitting that we honour the memory of the beloved name of the Combers by occupying that dark and hitherto wholly neglected district.

“At the request of the Committee, Mrs. Lewis and myself made a journey into the Zombo country in the months of June and July, with a view of ascertaining the suitability or otherwise of the place for a mission station. We were well received in most parts, but in some places we were regarded with much suspicion, and the people were very much afraid of Europeans. Until recently no white man had settled among the Zombos within the Portuguese territory, and now there are only two Portuguese—one a trader and the other a Government official. Even these have settled close on the borders, and they are the only representatives of civilisation at present. There are no missionaries anywhere near Zombo, and the work naturally falls upon our Society. Besides, the Zombo language being to all practical purposes the same as that spoken at San Salvador, we consider it doubly incumbent upon us as a Mission to establish ourselves among these people without any further delay.

“I, therefore, confidently appeal to the many friends at home for their prayerful sympathy and practical support in this new forward movement. Let me say at once that we need £1,000 to build temporary and permanent stations, and that we expect to receive this sum in special

gifts to be devoted to the erection of the Comber Memorial Station. We are anxious to complete this work without in any way being a burden to the general fund of the Society. Many friends have already intimated their intention of contributing to this special fund; and we feel sure that there are many more in all parts of the country who will co-operate in this matter, and enable us to raise up a living and lasting memorial to those who lived, laboured, and died for the evangelisation of Africa.

“Zombo is a name given to an extensive tract of country lying to the east of San Salvador and about a hundred miles distant. The name is often applied to a wider area than that occupied by that branch of the Congo family known as Zombos. Zombo proper has an area of over three thousand square miles and is very thickly populated. From native reports we were prepared to see large townships, but we were astonished to find so many people everywhere. Nowhere on the Lower Congo is there anything that can bear comparison with Zombo for population, and without any reservation we can say that this district presents a most promising field for missionary work.

“Superstition and heathenism are rampant everywhere, and the moral and spiritual darkness is simply appalling. We witnessed sights and scenes which are only possible to the most degraded of human beings. They know nothing of God; they have the name of God in their language and upon their lips, but what idea the name conveys to their mind it is difficult to say. An

example of this vagueness is seen in the fact that on several occasions they addressed me by that name, and on my remonstrating with them and explaining that we were only men teaching them of God and His love to us all, they insisted upon calling me 'Son' of God. Such things are very revolting to one's feelings, but it shows their utter darkness and ignorance of spiritual things. In Zombo the houses and towns are full of fetishes and charms; we came across many fetishes which even our carriers had never seen before. One thing interested us all, and we found it in many towns. It was a 'trap to catch the devil.' It was cleverly arranged—sometimes on the square space where the people meet for palavers, and sometimes in the houses—with cord loops and cane springs, and they had special charms to attract their prey into it. The idea was very commendable, and the trap would be a great blessing to the world at large if it were successful. But they all confessed that the trap had not caught yet! I enclose two photographs, which will serve as samples of carved images, placed by the roadside to guard the entrance into the towns.

"In most of the towns we visited we had a good hearing, as the people were very curious to know what we had come for. We took with us as carriers several of our San Salvador Christians, who were a great help in getting the people together, as well as in speaking. Our headman, Mata, is well versed in native customs, and knows all about the tricks of witch doctors and others, having gone through them all in his early days. He is also a capital speaker, and is sharp at taking

up points and meeting objections made. At one town, where the chief begged us to prolong our stay a day longer, so that he might call his friends from other towns to come and hear us, we had one of the most interesting gatherings that I have seen in Africa. The crowd which assembled squatted on the ground in the usual open space, and by the time we were summoned there was a large audience of several hundreds. The men arranged themselves on both sides, leaning on their loaded guns, while the women kept at a distance right in front of us, just near enough to hear, and the carriers and our boys took their position behind my wife and myself. We sang a hymn to begin with, and then I spoke to them as simply as I could of the message which we had come to deliver, and they all listened attentively. When I had done Mata got up and told them how the missionaries had come in their country years ago in order to tell them of God, how many at San Salvador and other places had been brought into the light of the gospel of Christ, and how they were doing all they could to enlighten and help their fellow country people. He retold the old story of the death of Christ and His resurrection. The people were intensely interested, but on hearing of the resurrection some of them began with expressions of dissent, and this led to a lively but good-natured discussion on fetishism and native superstitions.

“They wanted Mata to answer some questions bearing on witchcraft; among other things, they wished to know that if it was a wicked thing to kill people, what were they to do with witches?

Killing 'ndoki' (witch) was certainly a good thing. Mata denied that there was such a thing as 'ndoki,' and graphically told them how the witch-doctors deceive them with lies and tricks. He related to them his own personal experiences in early life, and was often interrupted by shouts of laughter and approbation from the audience, and they all saw that the speaker was well up in his subject. Objectors plied him with questions, and he took them one by one, and exposed the utter rottenness of their customs. After much talk and banter, Mata, with his usual boldness, asked if there was a witch doctor present who could tell them all about it, whereupon a grey-bearded old man rose on his feet and said that he was one. Mata asked him to tell what 'ndoki' was. He said that for many years he had followed his calling as a witch doctor, but he himself had never seen a 'witch,' and in a bold speech he went over what Mata had said, and added emphatically that all he had told them that day was perfectly true. The crowd howled and hooted at the old man, and some became rather angry at this admission of their witch doctor, but the majority of them sided with Mata, and declared that 'God's palaver' was good. I interfered at this point, and order being restored, I tried to impress upon their mind that each man must think for himself in this matter. We had told them the message, and showed them how they may obtain salvation and go to heaven, and that we could do no more than this, but that each man in his heart must decide for himself. Thus our long afternoon meeting came to a close, and the people returned to their homes. We hope

and pray that they will retain the thing which they heard that day for the first time in their minds, and realise the truth and blessedness of the gospel message.

“At this and many other towns the women were particularly friendly, and my wife had them together separately for teaching. A white man in Zombo was a wonder to behold, but a white lady much more so, and the women were not so frightened at my wife as at myself. Her presence on this journey was on this account a great help in getting at the women. The first announcement that ‘white men’ were coming into a town was a signal for a general stampede of the women and children; but my wife generally being the first to arrive in her hammock, the carriers would call after them and assure them that this person was a woman like themselves, then they returned to her to shake hands. After a while it would gradually dawn upon them that we spoke their language, and friendship was at once established, and very inconveniently they would crowd around us from morning till night.

“This fresh advance into the ‘regions beyond’ calls for renewed energy and consecration on our part, and for more sympathy and help from Christians at home. I feel convinced that these new responsibilities will move the Churches at home to a greater liberality than ever before, and deepen their interests in the work abroad, and fill them with a fuller measure of prayer and self-sacrifice. They call upon us all to a purer, whole-hearted devotion to our Master, and compel us in all humbleness of spirit to supplicate the Throne

of Grace, whence alone we can obtain strength and guidance needed for the work. There is much land still to be possessed in the name of the Lord. 'Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.' "

The foregoing article was written for publication. It was accompanied by another, written for the information of the Committee, to be published or not, at their discretion. This also was printed under the title, "Further Incidents," and I give it here.

"We first of all made our way to the Makela towns, where there is a Portuguese Resident and a trader. There are two or three firms who are arranging for sites, and are about to send their representatives there, so they evidently look upon it as a promising field for trade. As our business was to make friends with the natives, we declined the offers of hospitality kindly tendered to us by the Resident and trader, and stayed in native huts as guests of the people. We were well received at all these towns, and the native chiefs were very pressing in their representations, asking us to build in their towns. Both at Mbongi (where the Resident lives) and at Mbanza Makela (the principal town of the group) they begged of me to choose a plot of ground and build immediately. These Makela people came to San Salvador sometimes, and know me well by name and repute, and they wanted me to make a promise that I would come to stay in their town. I explained that I wanted to see all the country first, and that I could make no promise just then. Still, we were

very glad to receive such a hearty welcome, and we stayed there several days, including Sunday.

“The chief of Makela supplied me with a guide to take us to the next district—Mbuzu—with its thirty-six towns and a population of about five thousand. All along the route we passed many towns, including Ngombe, with its population of about three thousand. Both on the right and left there were large towns which I could not visit or form any idea of the number of people in them. We were now among people unaccustomed to white men, very superstitious, frightened, and suspicious. We were well received at Mbuzu, and they begged us to stay a day longer, which we did, and they came in good force to hear our message. We were making our way to the Nkisi River, which runs in a north-west direction to the Congo River, into which it empties itself between Wathen and the Pool. We had been told that there was a very large population on the banks of this river, but on reaching Kibulungu we found that the towns were not large nor numerous. The valley is exceedingly swampy, and in the wet season the river overflows its banks, and crossing in canoes is a dangerous business. Native ferries are the only means of crossing, and alligators are plentiful. Altogether, the river district is not tempting, either as a place of abode or a field of labour. The towns are difficult to reach on account of the river and swamps. We had intended to cross the Nkissi into the Kidia district, but from the hills on this side we could see that the towns opposite were less numerous than on this, and therefore we decided to turn back and waste no time on an

unlikely district. Besides, the River Nkisi would be a great obstacle in the transport of goods to the Kidia side. We therefore gave up all idea of crossing, and after three days' stay we made our way back to Zombo proper.

“Two days' journey brought us to Kinza, another populous district, where we stayed three days. Three hours' march further south is Kibokolo, which may be considered the heart of Zombo. This district is very thickly populated, and here is one of the most important markets in the country. The principal town—shown in the map—is the largest I have seen in Congo. I estimate that there are about five thousand people in it (San Salvador has about fifteen hundred—not more than two thousand). Within a one-hour radius there are at least a score of towns of some considerable size. I was not able to visit these towns, and cannot therefore form any estimate of the number of people within easy reach. This is by far the best centre for mission work. Heathenism is rampant, and never before have I seen such a display of fetishes and superstitious rites. Our appearance in the district caused much confusion, and the people were afraid lest we should bewitch them and cause them all to die right off. There were cries of, ‘The country is dead, the country is dead’; and I have no doubt but that they firmly believed it. However, in about an hour's time we succeeded in finding the chief, and he gave us a native house to sleep in, and then some of the people came round us to shake hands. That evening the chief and some of his followers came together, and I talked to them

about the gospel and explained our message. They could not understand anybody being so disinterested as to take all this trouble for their sake. Next day, being market day, the chiefs of the surrounding towns came and discussed with the Kibokolo folks our presence in their country. There was a strong party in favour of fighting and killing us, carriers and all; but others would not agree to this, as they heard we had stayed at many towns on the way but knew of nothing bad done by the white man or his carriers. At last they agreed to drive us away from their towns, but no bodily harm was to be inflicted upon us. We found this out afterwards; at the time we knew nothing about the agitation against us.

“Early in the afternoon the townfolk—many of whom were intoxicated with palm wine and did not know exactly what they were doing—raised a cry that the white man’s boys were poisoning the water (they were washing some clothes in the stream which runs through the centre of the town, and the soap was considered poison), and that a carrier was seen hiding a charm in the ground outside the town; and again that one of the carriers was ill with smallpox; all of which were absolutely false, but the leaders invented them to create an uproar and force us away. In an extraordinarily short space of time the greater part of the town were around us, some with loaded guns and others with cutlasses, spears, bows and arrows, and sticks, while the witch doctors and women brought out their fetishes and commenced dancing and gesticulating in the wildest manner. This was heathenism in its worst aspects, and the

scene was indescribable. The excitement was growing in intensity, and their attitude became more threatening, and they were demanding our immediate departure. I got all the carriers and boys together, and induced them to keep perfectly quiet. The owner of the house which we occupied was very friendly, and he with three or four others tried to keep back the crowd. We told them over and over that we would not go away that day, do what they would. The chief sent us the usual complimentary present of two fowls and a calabash of native beer—said to be non-intoxicating—for the carriers. This was to dismiss us from the town 'on friendly terms,' and he considered his responsibility at an end. The 'beer,' as we suspected, had been previously 'cursed' by the witch doctor, and it was supposed to have the power of killing us all at once if we partook of it. I accepted the present, and the carriers finished the drink in the presence of all, and they were greatly astonished to find that they did not fall down dead on the spot. I told the headman, who brought the present, that we did not mean to go away that day, but that in the morning we would pay our respects to the chief before leaving their town. The excitement among the people, however, did not cool down, for they kept on at a furious rate to the middle of the night. We retired to bed early, and in spite of the beating of drums and the blowing of horns, we managed to get some sleep. Next morning we packed up our things, and the same noise and excitement continued. They were evidently surprised at our showing no fight. A crowd followed us about a mile or two out-

side the town, with their horns and drums ; but for some reason or other they changed their cursing into blessing, and were calling upon the 'spirits' to protect the white man and his people 'if they have done no harm in the town.' So we left Kibokolo, but we had carried out our plans in full, except that we had hoped to stay in this town a few days longer. We thought that, on the whole, it was the wiser policy to retire for the time being, and let the people have time to find out that our presence did them no real harm. Still, at Kibokolo there are two or three who gave up their houses for ourselves and carriers, and who stood by us all through the uproar.

"On our return journey a most unusual thing occurred, which I have great hopes will cause them to change their attitude towards us. When nearing San Salvador we found that the whole country was much disturbed on account of a mistaken policy of the Portuguese Residents, and the people of Lembelwa and Tanda districts had closed the road to the coast against all carriers. We met some five hundred Zombos returning to their country with their rubber, having failed to pass. A large number were from the Kibokolo district. They were much afraid of us, lest we should retaliate on them for the treatment we had received in their country ; but I succeeded in getting them together and persuaded them to come along with me, promising to pass them to the coast without molestation. It took some time to convince them of my good intentions, but ultimately they agreed to trust themselves to me. On the next day we came to the disturbed district,

and I took my position in front of the whole company. At the entrance into each town we were met by armed men, who were stopping passers-by. I was well known to them all, and they made no resistance when I asked them to stand on one side, and waited myself until the Zombos had passed. That night all of us slept in one of the disturbed towns, and I gathered the chiefs together and talked to them very strongly of the wickedness and foolishness of their behaviour, the headmen of the Zombos listening to all.

“The outcome of our palaver was that they promised to reopen the road and allow carriers to pass unmolested. The effect of this upon the Zombos was very remarkable, for they had looked upon the white man as their enemy, and now they saw that we were their best friends after all. When they return from the coast they will inform their people what happened, and we hope for a very different reception at Kibokolo next time we go. The native Christians who accompanied us as carriers were delighted at the turn of affairs, and Mata, the headman of the caravan, said to me that night, ‘Oh, master, I have seen a wonderful work of God to-day; the Kibokolo people drove you away, but when these carriers return home your name will be lifted up to the sky all through Zombo. Truly God has wrought this marvellous work.’ We, too, feel in the same way, and that this incident will help very materially in the opening up of Zombo to the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray that it may be so.

“I have entered fully into this incident, so that you may be able to understand our position with regard to Kibokolo. It is by far the best place for a mission station, and it may be that very soon we can build there without much difficulty. We have, however, to face strong prejudices against the white man, and I feel that it is better to wait a little and not to unduly force our way contrary to the will of the people. We cannot, if we wished it, depend on any protection from the Portuguese Government. As you know, there are already a trader and a Portuguese official in Zombo, and their conduct towards the natives does not make it easier for us who go on a different mission; and I deem it of the utmost importance that we should enter the country as soon as possible. The longer we delay the more difficult will it be to disabuse the minds of the people.

“I am deeply sensible of the great responsibility laid upon me in making suggestions as to Zombo. I have kept back this report for a month in order to consider the whole question very carefully, and now I am in a position to lay before you the conclusions I have arrived at as to the course to be taken:—

“1. The Zombo country is beyond doubt a most promising field for missionary labour, and no matter where we settle there is a good population; for itinerating purposes we are within reach of an immense number of people.

“2. Our duty to occupy the country is emphasised by the fact that no other society works there, or anywhere within reach.

“3. The language is practically the same as at

San Salvador, and all the literary work done on the Lower River will serve for Zombo immediately.

"4. Kibokolo is the most populous district, and the place where I would most desire to settle and make our permanent station, if it be possible.

"5. The transport expenses will be about 10s. per load from Matadi to Zombo, which is lower than that of any other station of the Congo Mission, excepting San Salvador. For the first year we may have to work the transport in two stages, *viâ* San Salvador, but there will be no difficulty in getting carriers to go through with our loads from Matadi to Zombo after a little while."

The reader has been informed in an earlier chapter of how Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, having returned from Kibokolo, continued their work in San Salvador, awaiting the consent of the Committee for the forward move. When that consent came it was supposed that the work in Zombo would have to be begun in Makela, until such time as the Kibokolo people had come to a better mind. But in the spring of 1899 the foreseen revulsion of feeling had already taken place, and on April 18th Mr. Lewis was able to write to the Committee in the following terms:—

"It seems now almost certain that we shall be able to settle at once at Kibokolo, instead of first going to Makela. We are now in negotiation with the Kibokolo people, who are most desirous we should settle with them; and I hope by the next mail to send you positive information on this matter. The prospect just now is most encour-

aging; the work at San Salvador also is most cheering. Last week I baptized eleven persons, and there are fourteen other candidates."

Reviewing his work in connection with the Congo Mission, Mr. Lewis wrote at the same time:—

"It is now nearly seventeen years since my acceptance by the Society for work at the Cameroons, and thirteen since my transfer to the Congo Mission, and during this period I have been stationed with my wife at San Salvador. We have seen the formation of a native Church, which has grown slowly but steadily year by year, and our Church roll numbers at present 142, and there are many more inquiring after the truth. We have experienced much blessing in the work here, and in many ways it will be hard to tear ourselves away from the people and the work. Yet I must confess that never before have I felt so eager for work in fresh fields where the gospel has hitherto never been heard of.

"In spite of the fact that I have seen many years of service in Africa, my feeling to-day is much as I felt when I was first permitted to come to this land—a feeling of a young man just entering upon his life's work. We look eagerly forward to this Zombo opportunity, and pray God to give us all the strength and wisdom needed, and to guide us in all our ways.

"In entering upon this new and forward work I trust that what we may have lost of the enthusiasm and buoyancy of youth will be more than compensated by the experience which we have had of the work and of the people. May

God go with us and prosper us. We are delighted that Mr. Pinnock is associated with us in this new and deeply interesting movement. The way is, indeed, being wonderfully opened up, and the Master Himself seems to be calling to us to go in and possess the land."

In the foregoing paragraphs Mr. Lewis speaks mainly for himself. But his feelings were perfectly in accord with those of his wife. It was their singular happiness not only to share domestic life in confiding love, but to stand side by side in life's practical labours and conflicts, and to be of one mind, without the need of laborious reconciliation, in those critical junctures which call for new decisions. They were made for each other. It was restful to be with them.

The negotiations were successful, and a little later Mr. Lewis writes with natural exultation, recalling the facts of his first visit to Kibokolo, and rejoicing in the fulfilment of his own prophecy.

"I am now in a position to report the satisfactory ending of the negotiations with the chiefs and people of the Kibokolo district, in reference to the establishment of our new Zombo station in that neighbourhood.

"You will remember that on our visit to Zombo last year I was very much impressed with the large population of the Kibokolo towns, and the fine sphere presented for missionary work. There was no doubt in my mind but that this was the place which we had been looking for.

Unfortunately, however, when they suspected that we were contemplating to build a station and settle in Zombo, they were very anxious to get rid of us, and on the second day gathered around us with their guns, cutlasses and sticks, demanding our immediate departure. You will also remember that on the way back to San Salvador the caravan route had been closed against Zombos and other tribes. About five hundred Zombos—and among them many from the Kibokolo towns—came with me (after they had been sent back by the disaffected people who had closed the road), and I was able to pass them through without any molestation. When these people returned from the coast they related all that had occurred, and the Kibokolo people began to think they had been foolish in sending us away as they did. Since then it seems that the natives in the neighbourhood of Kibokolo are troubled with the *capitas* from the Makela traders, who are finding carriers. These men, coming as they do from the white men, take many unauthorised liberties, and do much mischief in these towns. It is chiefly for this reason that they are anxious for me to come and build in their district, thinking that our presence there will be a protection to them. Some months ago the chiefs of the district called all the people together to discuss the situation and see what they could do. They all agreed that the best thing was to try and get 'Lewizi' to come and build there, or send one of his teachers to them. But then the difficulty was that they had driven me away from their town, and they were afraid to send a messenger to me in case I would

punish him. They then decided to send their messenger to the chief of Mbanza Mputu, and enlist his sympathy and help. He is a member of our San Salvador Church, and next in power to the King of Kongo. As a preliminary to open negotiations with me, they asked the chief of Mbanza Mputu to send a messenger to receive schoolboys to give me. This messenger went, and the boys were given him to bring to San Salvador. The messenger (also one of our Christians), was able to tell them that Mr. Lewis himself would be coming in a short time, and that they had better keep the boys until then, and that he would very likely build and settle at Kibokolo. There was a little jealousy between the different parties as to the town where the new white man should settle, but they are all satisfied to let me have my own choice of site and location. This intimation was received with great delight, and the messenger says that they kept on firing guns in all the towns, and there was general rejoicing. One of the Zombo lads came with the messenger, and he will return with us when we go. When we were returning from Zombo last year, and had passed the Zombos safely through the country, our headman said, 'Oh, master, I have seen a wonderful work of God to-day. The Kibokolo people drove you away, but when these carriers return home your name will be lifted up to the sky through Zombo. Truly God has wrought a marvellous work.' This prophecy has already become true, and we thank God for it. The people at present have only their material good in view; and we trust that, having won

their confidence in this, we shall be able soon to make them realise and understand our great message of God's love to sinners, and then His Name will be lifted and praised by the thousands of Zombos who are now in utter darkness.

"God has opened the way for us in a marvellous way, and we are now anxious to enter in by this open door. If all is well we hope to go and start the work of building at Kibokolo in three or four weeks from now, but owing to the shorthandedness of the San Salvador staff we may have to return and await the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Graham, leaving Mr. Pinnock alone in Zombo for a month or two."

In June, 1899, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, with Mr. Pinnock, left San Salvador for Kibokolo, to found the Comber Memorial station, as already recorded, and, in the following letter addressed to Mr. Baynes, Mrs. Lewis gives an interesting account of their experiences. The date is July 17th.

"My husband is writing to tell you of our return from Zombo and the founding of the Comber Memorial station. It is a peculiar pleasure to me to have a share in the work, as I have such happy memories of work at Camden Road with Mr. Comber, and of my first introduction to mission work in company with Carrie Comber at the Cameroons, beside later associations with others who bore that name. We thought you would like to know something of the journey we have just taken, so I am writing down a few incidents.

"You know, I think, that Noso, the chief of Mbanza Mputu, accompanied us on this journey,

and we found his presence most helpful. His name as head of the tribe is known everywhere, although they had not seen him since his conversion, and great was their astonishment at his changed demeanour. The lion had become a lamb. The chief, who formerly thought nothing of shooting a man for a slight act of disrespect, was now so meek and humble that his own carriers took advantage of him, and thought a great deal more of their own comfort than of his. After going some distance from San Salvador we had some difficulty in getting people to show us the road; we were consequently taken many miles out of our way, through some most picturesque scenery, but by roads more fit for monkeys than men. Some of the hills are very steep, and I had to scramble up on hands and feet, while it took the combined efforts of three men to drag and push the poor old chief. We went through one very large swamp which is utilised as an eel fishery. In some of the towns they were very much afraid at first. In one, on my arriving first, every woman and child disappeared, and the men took up their guns. I told my hammock men to say who we were, and upon their calling out, 'They are the English teachers who have come with Noso,' every gun was put down, they crowded round to shake hands, and then asked me to speak that they might 'hear my voice.' In many of the towns we were received with beating of drums, firing of guns, and dancing. In consequence of the excitement we were not able to do much preaching, but in all the towns we stayed at, either Mr. Lewis or Mata explained to the people the

object of our coming among them, though it is hard for them to believe that we only go for their good.

“When we arrived at Nkusu, the place from which the messengers were sent, we had a very warm welcome, and found the chief, who is indeed the head of the whole district, a very nice, quiet man. We stayed here from Friday till Wednesday. The people would have liked us to stay and build, but consented to send for the Kibokolo chiefs.

“On Sunday morning Noso sent a man round the town to blow a trumpet and tell the people all to stay at home and come to meeting to hear the white man’s teaching; and soon after breakfast he came for us with a train of chiefs. They came saluting in Congo fashion, kneeling down every few yards, and clapping their hands. We went with them to a cool place and had a meeting, Mr. Lewis and Mata speaking, and Noso finishing with a few words, saying how good a thing this teaching was. Before we had quite finished others came from surrounding towns, so we began over again. So it went on, relays of people, and the old story was told again and again. After a time I left, but at the door of our hut I had a little crowd of women and boys, who gladly listened while I spoke to them.

“In the afternoon we had another meeting there. A very interesting incident occurred. Mata was speaking about our teaching—how it brought peace and good-will, how people should love one another, and not keep anger in their hearts. The chief, Ndosimao, was not in the

meeting, but heard it all from his own house. Now it seems that he and two other chiefs who were there were at enmity. As Mata finished speaking Ndosimao appeared, walked through the crowd up to where we were sitting, and, kneeling down, said, 'We have been asking for the white man; this teaching of his is good, so let us receive him and his teaching and make friends.' He then did obeisance to the other two chiefs, who returned his salutation, after which they shook hands and were friends. This man seems to be prepared for the gospel. We trust and pray he may receive it. What made this incident the more remarkable was that both the others were his inferiors.

"The following day the Kibokolo chiefs arrived, and then we found that there was a great deal of jealousy as to where we were to build; in fact, they became so hot about it that we feared we should be only creating a disturbance by going there at all, and we decided when they left to go off to Makela the next morning. This they said they would prevent us doing, threatening to shoot any one who passed through. Some of the carriers were very much frightened, so the next morning we sent to Ndosimao, asking for a guide to take us another way. While Mata was gone, however, Noso arrived, saying the Kibokolo folks would agree to anything rather than we should build at Makela. So it was settled. We went first to Kinzalu, the chief of which town, Dom Miguel, was the one who caused the trouble the night before. He is an intelligent man, who has been about a great deal. He showed us much kindness,

and his people were very friendly. It is a very nice town, and only forty minutes from Nzamba, where we are building the new station. We went there the next morning, and were received kindly by the chief, and our friend of last year, Mbala, who was very pleased to see us again. The people, as yet, are shy and somewhat suspicious.

“Noso and Ndosimao both came with us, the former staying several days, when he left us to return by another route. On Sunday we had a very good meeting, when we tried to explain our message, and in the afternoon eight of us sat together at the Lord’s Table for the first time in that dark land—one a Zombo man, who had been working with Mr. Pinnock at Tumba, and while there had been brought to Christ. He was accepted at our last Church meeting at San Salvador, and sat with us for the first time at Kibokolo. May he be but the earnest of many more! It was a hallowed time; we spoke and thought of those who have gone before, and remembered Him Who died for us and for all those thousands of dark souls around. The work before us is overwhelming. We have now gone and returned by four different roads. But wherever we go there are towns close together and crowds of people in utter darkness. But God has so wonderfully guided us hitherto and has gone before us, opening the road and preparing the people to receive us, that we dare not lose heart in view of the vastness of the work, but rather thank Him for all His goodness in the past and take courage for the future.”

In September the new chapel was opened at San Salvador, and in October Mr. and Mrs. Lewis started out to make their new home in Kibokolo. The parting from dear friends and the relinquishing of dear work involved pain which no eager expectations of new service could quench, and in describing their send-off Mrs. Lewis remarks that it seemed like going to one's own funeral. Yet it was solace to her to remember that whereas when she began her work at San Salvador no girl or woman knew the alphabet, now she could leave many of her classes and meetings in the hands of young native women, who had been educated and brought to Christ.

Of their departure, their reception at Kibokolo and their immediate prospects, Mr. Lewis writes in the following terms:—

“It is with devout thankfulness to God that I am able to report our safe arrival and our settlement at our new Comber Memorial Station. My wife and I left the many friends at San Salvador on October 7th, and we reached our destination on the 15th, when we were warmly received by our dear friend and colleague, Mr. John Pinnock, who had preceded us the previous week, having come to San Salvador to join us in the festivities in connection with the opening of the new chapel there. It was difficult to wrench ourselves finally from the place where we had seen so many happy days in the service of God, and it was with very mixed feelings that we said good-bye to the Christians at San Salvador and to our co-workers there. Still, the joy at the prospect of new work in a wholly heathen country more than



FERRY OVER NKISI RIVER. MRS. LEWIS IN CANOE.



HOME OF MR. AND MRS. LEWIS AT COMBER MEMORIAL STATION,
KIBOKOLO (1903).

overbalanced all our regrets and sorrow. It was a great comfort to us to feel that the work which we were leaving was now well provided for in the appointment of Mr. Bowskill and of Mr. and Mrs. Wooding to that station, as colleagues of Mr. and Mrs. Graham. The work at San Salvador has made great advance during the past few years, and we are very thankful to God for all that we have seen there. May the Master be very near to those who labour there, and abundantly bless the growing native Church and make it a power for good in Kongo-land.

“At Kibokolo we are surrounded by a very large population, and we shall have our hands very full with work. As yet the people are a little afraid of us, and they find considerable difficulty in understanding why we have come to Africa at all. They understand the business of a Government official or of a trader; but they cannot account for the purpose of a missionary in coming to them and not buying either rubber or ivory. When we tell them that we bring them the good news by which they may be saved, at first it gives a fine scope for their superstition to work. The general opinion among these people is that we come to take their souls away, and especially those of children, to be made into white men in the white man’s country. They believe that it is our subtle way of carrying on the slave-trade. This is the common belief; but of course many know better, especially the men-folk, who go to sell their rubber, &c., at the coast. As the people become accustomed to us and to our ways they will see things in a different

light, and this is so with not a few of them already.

“Mr. Pinnock has made good use of his two months’ residence here, for several of the leading men in this town are on very friendly terms with him, and will do anything for him. When the food for workmen is short, he has only to speak to the chief and he gets it. It is wonderful what influence he has, when we consider the short time he has been among them. Nearly all his time has been spent in putting up a grass-house, which is to serve all three of us for the present. We are now living in this house, which is very comfortable. It has two rooms measuring 18 feet by 15 feet. Mr. Pinnock occupies one, and my wife and I the other. At one end we have a ‘lean-to,’ which serves for a dining-room. The furniture at present consists principally of cases of provisions and bales of cloth, with some tin trunks containing our personal apparel, &c., which we have brought with us from San Salvador. The rainy season has just commenced, and we are thankful to be under a rainproof shelter before the very heavy rains come. We shall live in this condition until next May or June, when I trust we shall be in a position to commence building our permanent houses.

CHAPTER XII

LIFE AT KIBOKOLO

MR. and Mrs. Lewis began their work in Kibokolo, Zombo, in October, 1899, and left it finally seven years later, having spent the year 1901, and the first half of 1902, in England on furlough. Those seven years were lean and hungry years which would have eaten up all the joy of former harvests if the hearts of the workers had not been nourished and cheered by unfailing faith in God. It was their business and that of their colleagues, in fact and in figure, to clear the ground, and transform a patch of wilderness into fields capable of bearing plenty. Their new neighbours were a wild, shy, suspicious people, and life at San Salvador with all its crudities seemed like civilisation when compared with the unmitigated barbarism of Zombo.

The people had invited Mr. and Mrs. Lewis to come among them, but they had done so, moved by considerations which were of the earth earthy, and it was inevitable that they should experience a measure of disappointment. The missionaries were of course prepared for this, and entered the open door with a good conscience, assured that

in the end their mission would secure for the people even greater earthly blessings than those they had forecast.

At first their work consisted in the main of building houses and making friends. All the time they preached the gospel, knowing in their hearts that there was small likelihood of their doctrine winning acceptance, until they themselves had been accepted and had won trust and love.

In the beginning, the women, and by consequence the children, were afraid of Mrs. Lewis, and it was an event in her life, when the first Zombo baby stretched out its little arms in welcome to her, suffered her to nurse it, and was loath to be given up. She did not wait for the women to come to her, but went to them in their towns, exhibiting skilled and patient kindness which could not fail in the end.

Meanwhile the charge, domestic and educational, of the children on the station, and multifarious household duties, kept her perpetually busy. It should also be mentioned that she maintained a regular correspondence with many friends at home, and with several of the missionaries' wives upon the Congo, in whose work she took the deepest and most sisterly interest, and who were wont to consult her when difficulties arose; and quite commonly the difficulties were at least as frequent as the mails.

Somewhat straitened for human society her affection went out to the tame, dumb creatures about her, and to one who was not dumb, the parrot. Her cat, "Sandy," whom the mail-man lost on the way to Kibokolo, was brought into San

Salvador after many days, and sent on, safely this time, to Kibokolo, to the great joy of his indulgent mistress. "Edward," Mr. Pinnock's donkey, was useful as well as handsome, and her friendship with him inclined to weakness; so much so that when one day he walked into the dining-room and eat her last loaf of bread, she merely reminded him in gentle tones that it was wicked to steal. After Edward's day came Taffy and Queenie, two mules, who were much esteemed, especially Queenie, who died too early; and later a cow and bull, the joint property of Mr. Hooper and Mr. Pinnock. The bull died. The cow pined and took to wandering. Mrs. Lewis was sorry for her grief, and when Mr. Hooper decided to shoot her, to provide beef for a certain feast, Mrs. Lewis was torn between sentiment and prudence. She could not touch such unholy beef, nor could she be sorry that it would feed a hungry crowd.

Her garden was an increasing joy to her, and though she loved flowers with something akin to passion, her dutifulness as a housewife made kitchen produce her first care. When Mr. Lewis and Mr. Hooper, who also had the building gift, much to his senior colleague's joy, had erected the permanent houses, residential conditions were pleasant enough.

But Mrs. Lewis was not in Kibokolo for pleasure, but for souls; and as the years passed her hunger grew. It was joy to her when she had a decent school once more, and women sitting at her feet to listen to the gospel; and the new chapel and the ultimately growing congregations called forth her glad thanksgiving; but she wanted souls; and

when the call to Kimpese came, her lament was that she would not be in Kibokolo when the harvest of souls began, of the coming of which she had no doubt. Even as she was writing this lament, news arrived of the baptism of the first Kibokolo convert, and she took her part in the happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Hooper, and of their common Lord.

Shortly after her return from furlough in 1902 tragical events occurred which desolated the towns about the station, and darkened the immediate outlook of the Mission. But light came again into the sky, and the work went on.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis were fortunate in their colleagues at Kibokolo: an immeasurable mercy! John Pinnock was their old and tried friend. Mr. Hooper, who came out to them fresh from Bristol College, was made of true missionary stuff, and walked straight into their affections and their confidence. When later Mrs. Hooper appeared in Kibokolo she found waiting for her a great woman's love, which by God's grace she knew how to appreciate, to retain, and to deserve. Mr. and Mrs. Bowskill's temporary sojourn in Kibokolo was also a great joy to Mrs. Lewis, and the friendship formed in the months of its duration lasted to the end of her life.

From Kibokolo she made many journeys with her husband, of which only hints and glimpses can be given to the reader, and one journey without him. The story of this journey and its sequel is so unique and heroic, that I have detached it from the sequence of events, and related it at some length in a following chapter.

For the rest the reader must be content with a selection of passages from Mrs. Lewis's correspondence, which I am not without hope may suffice to convey, in their cumulative effect, a realistic impression of life at Kibokolo.

"November 13, 1899.—Alice wonders how I should like to be doing servant's work. As a matter of fact that is what I am chiefly doing these days since coming here. No, none of the San Salvador people are with us here. We have two wretched workmen from another town, our own boy Veza, and John Pinnock's boy Kinsengwa. That is our staff of workmen, with another man who originally came from Zombo, but is leaving at the end of the year. Then we have Kumbu and Zika, two boys about twelve, who have been with us some time at San Salvador and wished to stay with us; Kidimbu, a little boy of about eight, who comes from Nkaba, where Nlekai is working, and John Pinnock's Mayowela, a little fellow of seven. I have two girls, Talanga and Salune, aged respectively, perhaps, eleven and thirteen, and between us we do all there is to be done, cooking, washing, mangling, ironing, and the regular routine, besides some ground clearing and sewing; and I have school with those six in the afternoon. Of course, being so small, they can do nothing without help. All my mornings have to be given up to household matters; but these things are important, without which we cannot keep in health, so I don't consider it is time wasted, although it is not so much to my taste as preaching and teaching.

"Yesterday was Sunday, and Tom and I went to another town to hold a service. The chief

there rejoices in the name of 'Lion's tail,' and is the most sensible chief about here, though he is not much interested in God's palaver yet. Kinzala, his town, is about an hour from here. I went on Pinnock's donkey (who, by the way, has his head in at the door now). It is rather awkward riding sideways on a man's saddle, but I can manage it. We had not a large congregation as there was a funeral near, but our great object just now is to make friends. There was a nice little baby present who would come to me and didn't want to leave—the first in Zombo who has made friends, and I was quite pleased, for I miss all the little people at San Salvador who were my special friends. It was such a broiling day. I got so sunburnt that I am the colour of a lobster to-day. It was 90° in the shade yesterday. To-day it is raining and thundering incessantly. The weather just now is very trying, and in our grass-house, of course, we feel it more, not having proper doors and windows, so that the house is very draughty and one has to be very careful not to take cold.

"In the afternoon yesterday I went round the town and got into conversation with some women. One woman, when I asked her if she wouldn't come to meeting to hear 'God's palaver' said, 'But I have nothing to pay so how can I come?' That, of course, gave me a good opportunity of telling her about the free gift of God's love to all the world. This woman has been very friendly, and is the only one, so far, who has invited me into her house."

"April 10, 1900. (A circular letter to children.)—Since I last wrote to you we have removed

from our old home at San Salvador, where we spent so many happy years, and are settled here at the new station—my husband and self and Mr. Pinnock. I expect you will have read in the *Herald* about the opening of the new chapel at San Salvador, which Mr. Lewis had just finished before we left, and also about our arrival here. We were very sorry to leave all our dear friends, and on the day we parted we felt very sad indeed. But we are glad to be allowed to tell of God's love to those who have none others to tell them of it, and we often have nice letters from our old girls and boys in San Salvador, and sometimes some of the men come as carriers with our mails, so we do not forget one another. . . .

“Well, now, I am sure you want to hear something about our work here. You must remember it is very different from that at San Salvador. At present we are living in grass-houses, with just the sand for a floor. We have no chapel, only an open porch, where we meet on Sundays, and every afternoon I have school, a very small one, in our room, which has to serve all purposes except sleeping. We have only been here six months, and the people, although they begin to know us a little, still cannot understand what we have come for. They say, ‘These white men do not buy rubber or cows; they do not come here to rule, and they want us to come and talk with them and to send our children. They must want to buy our spirits and send them to the white man's country. We are not going to be caught! We will keep our women and children away, and while we will not offend them because they are very

powerful, we will just watch to see what they are up to.' Some time ago there was heard a peculiar rumbling sound, like a very slight shock of earthquake. When they heard it they said, 'That is Lewis's train, taking the spirits away.' Some of the men had been to Tumba and seen the train there.

"For some weeks now the country has been very unsettled, and the other towns threatened to come and fight our chief, Kapela, and his people, because they kept a white man in their town. Just then there happened, as is common in March, to be a lull in the rains, and their farms were getting dry. Now that April is in the rains have begun again. But the people put this down to us. While they were unfriendly we stopped the rain; now the palaver is nearly over we have brought it again. Poor creatures! how we long for the time when they shall open their hearts to receive our message of a loving Father and a tender Saviour and know that all things are ordered by Him. We have made a beginning; we have four little Zombo boys on the station, and I should like to tell you how we got them. When we had been here two or three months we thought it was time to make an effort to get children to school. So we asked all the chiefs of the district to meet us one day as we had something to talk to them about.

"They had been expecting this, and fifteen came with their followers—altogether over a hundred men assembled. We had made preparation for their entertainment, had killed and cooked a goat, opened some tins of sardines, and got some townswomen to cook 'luku' for them. Then we made three or four large jugs of lemonade. They would

not enter the house, so we spread mats for them outside, while we three sat under the eaves. Then Mr. Lewis told them once more the reasons for our being here, and that we wanted to teach their children. Those near could come daily; but we wanted some others to live with us, so that they might know our ways and might learn to read in God's book. There ensued a long discussion. One after another the chiefs spoke, some saying that was not what they wished for. They wanted a trader who would help them to get rich. Finally they went off to consult among themselves. When they returned most of them said they were willing to give us some boys, some did not speak, while others said they would let us have some carriers, but did not want their children to come to us. What was the good? However, they settled a day when they should bring some boys, and then we invited them into one of the houses to eat. But no, they would not enter; so the 'chop' was brought and they eat it as they sat, only one or two refusing to partake, as to 'eat goat' in Kongo means to acknowledge the one who provides it as your chief. I wished we could have photographed the scene, but we thought it might frighten them.

"On the day appointed only two parties turned up—Kapela, our head chief, and one other. Kapela brought three little boys and two young men, but as the latter have wives and families we said they could come daily to school. The three boys were delighted, and when their relatives' backs were turned began to dance for joy, and very proud they were when I rigged them out in new shirts and cloths.

“One of them is very bright, and gets on fast; the others are slower, but the youngest is a dear, affectionate little fellow. I must not tell you more about them now, or you will get tired of this letter; but just one thing I will add, to show you they are already learning the best of all truths. The other day in school I asked, ‘Who is the Son of God?’ and Mpululu answered, ‘Jesus.’ Then, ‘What did He come to earth for?’ and one of my Congo boys said, ‘To save us.’ But I asked again, ‘To save us from what?’ and again Mpululu answered, ‘From our sins.’ I thought that a very nice answer from a little heathen boy; don’t you?

“May 2.—Edward usually comes to school and has regular ‘larks’ with the children, racing about with them. Sometimes they get on his back, and he goes quietly a little way, then suddenly kicks up his heels and off they go. They don’t mind: there is only soft sand to fall on. It is just mischief of his! It is quite pretty to see little Mvulu cuddling him. I am going to get a snapshot one day of them. Well, this is a long riddle, mainly nonsense. But really I have not much to write. It is foundation work just now, and apparently little or nothing being done. On Sunday we had three boys, or men, to service here. J. P. went to a town close by and was sent away: ‘They didn’t want the teaching.’ Tom went to Nzamba in the afternoon and had a pretty fair audience, thirty to forty; J. P. to another town and had twelve. I cannot get about much till the rain ceases, and, besides, I have not been very first rate—neuralgia, &c. But I feel better now, and trust to be all right when the dry season comes.”

"June 22.—We have just returned from a visit of eight days to Kimfuti, Ndosiman's town. There was a funeral there and lots of people from other towns, so we had splendid opportunities for preaching. The people are friendly and the women not afraid, so we had quite a good time and have brought back with us the chief's nephew, a nice little boy of about eleven years old, I should think. I expect we shall get more from there later. We stayed at another town half-way, going and coming, and they too were friendly."

"July 14.—We have had no news later than May 25th, so know nothing. How thankful I shall be to hear that it [the Boer War] is at an end. Of course we have been interested in the demonstrations about the relief of Mafeking, and are delighted at the news, and proud of B. P. & Co., but people really seem to have gone mad.

"Here we are very quiet, and there is really nothing to tell. They are waiting for the materials to come up from Matadi to begin the new house. But there is a difficulty about carriers."

"October 12th.—The other day I got into a rare pickle. I went to a town an hour and a quarter from here, and, coming home, the donkey, having fasted for an hour or two, grew thinner, and the saddle got very loose and kept tumbling on one side. At last it was hopeless, especially as I had no bridle, and Edward would keep going round when the saddle twisted. I did not feel up to walking all the way home, as it was blazing hot. Fortunately I only had the three girls with me, so I made a virtue of necessity, and rode astride (Don't be too shocked, there was no one to see!)

until I got within sight of the station ; then dismounted and walked home. But I don't feel inclined for that game again."

In the long interval between the writing of the paragraph just quoted, and that which follows, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis spent another furlough in England, and returned again to Kibokolo. On the outward voyage they were happy in the company of their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Lawson Forfeitt. When the party left England the preparations for the Coronation were complete. At Teneriffe they heard the heavy news of the King's illness, and spent a week of grave anxiety, to be relieved by hopeful tidings at Sierra Leone.

"August 25, 1902. (To Mrs. J. Jenkyn Brown.) —We had a pleasant voyage and a very happy time at San Salvador with our old friends. Mr. and Mrs. Graham were well ; but Mrs. G. is overworked. I wish very much she had some one to help her ; I am afraid of her breaking down. We had an uproarious welcome here from our two colleagues, Messrs. Pinnock and Hooper, and also from the people, who really seemed glad to see us. They are much less afraid of us than they used to be, and the women come round about much more freely.

"I am hoping very soon now to have some women to teach. Several come to talk to the girls, and seem pleased when I go to them. Mrs. Graham kindly let me take one of her big girls, and I have two other little ones who are attached to two of our boys. I have two or three Zombo girls promised, but they are too small to come just yet.

“Mr. Hooper has had wonderful health; not a day’s illness since he came two years ago. Mr. Pinnock looked very poorly; he has just left for his furlough. They have both worked very hard, and have got up a nice house in which we are now living. Tom is now beginning our new house. It is a great comfort to have a boarded floor once more.

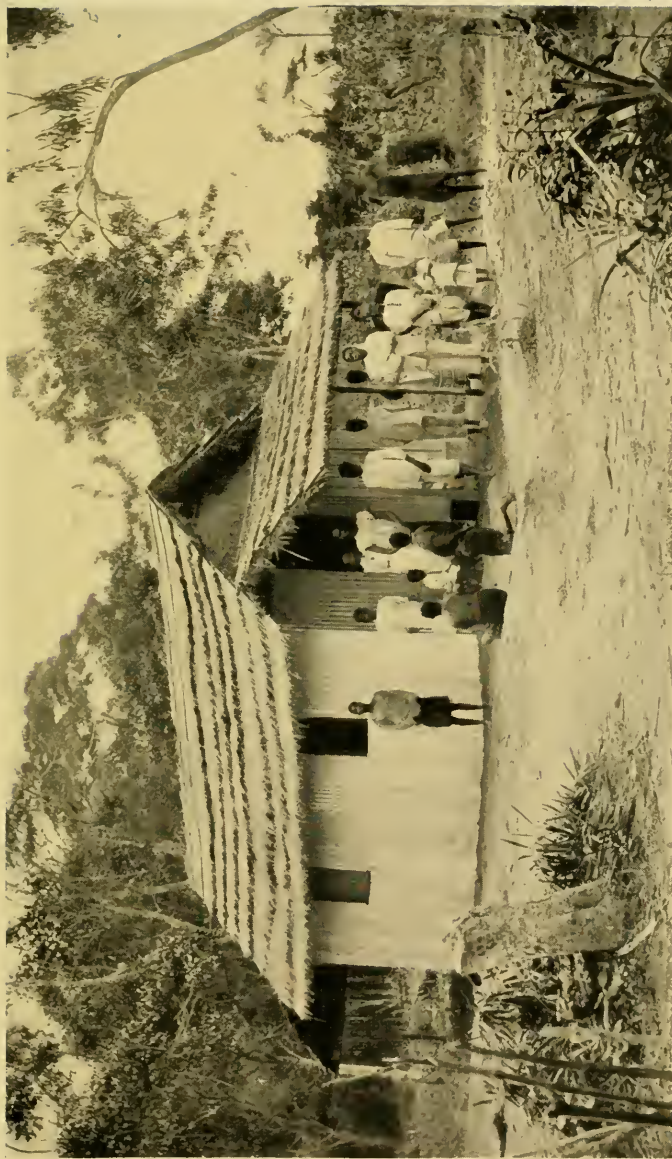
“We miss our old friend Edward very much, but the two mules we brought out with us are delightful. I rode nearly all the way up, and you can hardly imagine the lovely change it was from the hammock. They go beautifully. Tom rode the whole way, and so saved all his hammock men. They will be a great saving both of money and fatigue if they live. They are dear creatures, very friendly and tame. We have named them ‘Taffy’ and ‘Queenie.’ My little furry friend Sandy flourishes still; he actually knew me at once, and ever since has been doing his pussy best to let me know how glad he is.

“You will be pleased to know that my little boy, Daniel, has grown a very nice useful boy, and I am in hopes that he is going to turn out well. He with another came down to the coast to meet us. There and back was a walk of some four hundred miles. Not bad for a boy of twelve! He enjoyed it, I think, and was very pleased to see us again.”

“September 8th.—When I last wrote I had just recovered from a slight fever; I am thankful to say I have been quite well since then. Tom has been suffering from toothache, a most unusual thing for him; I do hope it will soon go, for it

pulls one down so. He is very busy starting our new house ; Mr. Hooper helps him in the morning, and takes school in the afternoon. I take the medicine in the morning, which is not much here compared with what it was at San Salvador. In the afternoon I give my three girls some lessons, and on Wednesday evening I have all the children to a Bible class. Yesterday was Sunday, and we had about twenty outside people to the service. That is the largest number we have had since we returned. I get two or three women sometimes to come and talk with me, and the girls on Sunday afternoons, but as yet I cannot get any girls to school. Some want to come very much, and one little thing came several afternoons running ; but she has been stopped by her master, and it is the same with the others ; so there is nothing for it but patience. They will come in time. I do all I can to make friends with the women ; I go round the towns as often as possible with the girls, so as to get them accustomed to me and to get to know them. Just now there seems nothing but burials ; day and night the drums are going, and the people dancing and howling. The darkness is appalling to think of, and although the light is here, as yet they will not come to it. Of course it is nothing new ; but it is so different from where we have been before. There the difficulty was to find time to talk to all the people who wanted to be taught ; here the trouble is to get the people to listen."

"September 30th.—Well ! here there is nothing to write about. Tom is housebuilding, assisted by Mr. Hooper, who teaches the boys in the



THE DISPENSARY AT KIBOKOLO. MRS. LEWIS STANDING IN DOORWAY.

afternoon, and studies the language in the evenings. They both of them take prayers in turn, to which we try to get the people to come, without much success so far. As for me, I am a kind of maid-of-all-work. I am housekeeper, gardener, organist, and occasional preacher, *i.e.*, when they both go out on Sunday morning. Sometimes, too, I go round to the towns on Sunday afternoon and hold a service. Last Sunday, after hunting everybody up, I got thirty, sometimes we only get two or three. One of the women who lives close by has just been here to sell plantain. I asked her why she did not come to service; she said, 'What will you give me for coming?' and that is the answer one usually gets."

"October 8, 1902. (A circular letter.)—A sad trouble has befallen us. As I write I look from the window upon the still smoking ruins of what but two days ago was the flourishing and most populous township in Zombo. But I will begin at the beginning and try to tell you what has happened.

"This is Wednesday. On Sunday morning, as we were just about to sit down to breakfast, two soldiers came asking to buy something. We told them to wait till the next day, and inquired then what they were here for. They said they had come from the Resident at Makela to demand carriers which were owing to him from Nzamba (the town just opposite, across the stream). We thought the people would be a little frightened, so did not expect a good meeting. Tom and Mr. Hooper went off, each to separate towns, and I had the service here. On their return we all felt a

little encouraged, for I had had over twenty townsfolk here, and they both had had fair numbers to listen.

"In passing through Nzamba Tom had found about fifteen soldiers there, he had also seen some of our folks and told them to keep quiet and give the men that were owing. Just before dinner we heard the sound of rifle firing, and as we sat at table the boys told us three men had been shot by the soldiers. Tom and Mr. H. went over to see if it were true, and found one man, the coming chief, dead, and two others of the headmen badly shot, both of whom died that evening. The soldiers had gone to the town where they were staying, and the people were vowing vengeance on Nkil'a nkosi, the chief of that town.

"There is an old feud between these towns and his, and lately Nkil'a nkosi has attached himself to the Portuguese Resident and traders at Makela, and has been doing his best to get our people into trouble. Now, through their own foolishness, he has succeeded only too well.

"It seems that the soldiers tied up one of the headmen, and two others rushed to untie him, whereupon the soldiers fired and shot all three. One soldier was badly wounded. He is here now, and we are afraid he will not recover.

"Tom tried all he could to persuade the Nzamba people not to follow the soldiers, but they would not listen, and when they had finished attending to the sick men the fighting men were all on their way to the fight.

"In the meantime the people were rushing here, bringing all their poor belongings into the station

as it was too late to go far. Our yard was soon full of women and children, goats, pigs, two cats, fowls, baskets of manioc and other food, and bunches of plantain which had been hastily cut down ; while under our house were packed matetes containing cloth, beads, gunpowder, &c. They were far too frightened to go back to their houses that night, so we packed them in with the children as well as we could, only glad to be able to prove to them that we were sorry for their trouble and wanted to help them. The men came begging Tom and Mr. H. to go and fight on their side, and because they refused, cannot understand how we can be their friends. Night at last came, and very little sleep any one had, as you may imagine, and by dawn the next morning all the women and children, or nearly all, had left the town to go to their various families in other and more distant towns. The Nzamba men buried their dead the first thing without any noise and did not intend to fight again that day, but the other side came down the hill calling out to them, so they went, and returned in the evening very proud of themselves, saying they had conquered. But their triumph was very shortlived.

“Yesterday morning about eleven o'clock we saw from our window the Portuguese flag on the top of the hill, and very soon recognised the Resident just behind, accompanied by four soldiers and men carrying his hammock.

“He came straight to the station, would not take any refreshment, said he merely wanted to hear what we knew of the palaver, and to ask us to see to the soldier who had been

wounded, and to ask me for some medicine for his wife.

“October 10th.—I had to leave off, but now I must try to go on with my tale. The Resident left us, saying that he was going to see the chiefs of the towns, but we could see from our windows that the towns were quite empty, and he simply passed through and returned whence he came. Directly after dinner Tom and Mr. Hooper rode off to see the sick soldier, and met him being brought here in a hammock. The Resident had told us that he had a thousand men from Makela with him, and they saw the valley was full of armed men. They had come from all the towns round; some to pay off old scores, others to be on the winning side, and to save themselves had joined Nkila. We gathered the children and workmen into our house and there stood and watched as they poured down the hill in hundreds and set fire to all the houses in Nzamba. It was hard for our three boys who came from there to see their town in flames and to know that their enemies had the best of it. ‘They could not have done it except with the white man’s soldiers,’ they said. At last they crossed the brook which separates the two towns, and began burning this one. The old man who is our nearest neighbour and the headman of this part stayed on the station, for his wife had gone with the other women. He has been a friend to us from the beginning, and it was very pathetic to see the poor old man watching with eager eyes as they came nearer and nearer to his house. They went into all the huts and took anything that was left. I am glad

to say it was not much in this town, but when they came near the station they stopped burning, and just then a tremendous storm came on, the worst we have had this season.

"The two little towns which I generally visit on a Sunday afternoon were destroyed, and one on the other side nearest to us. Whether it was the storm that stopped them going further we do not know, but they did not return to burn any more, though some came down the next morning to finish looting. We sent up to ask for some help with the sick man, and two soldiers came to stay with their wounded comrade. Soon after that the white sergeant arrived with a message asking Tom to call the chiefs of Kibokolo together. We were very glad to be able to say with truth that we did not know where they were, for it was only to get them into a trap.

"Yesterday morning the poor soldier died; his wounds had been left too long for any but skilled help to avail. They came and carried him away for burial, and that is the last we have seen of them. We hear that the Resident has gone back to meet the delimitation party at Makela, but the soldiers are left at Kimalomba (Nkila's town), and they are vowing vengeance against these people, so we are afraid we have not seen the end yet.

"There are fifteen houses left in this town; the next nearest is ten minutes away, and there are plenty of people within an hour. But it is a terrible upset, and at present we hardly know what to do or say. One little consolation we have, that the people evidently understand that we are their friends.

"Yesterday one of the wives of Mwan'a Mputu came to the station saying she did not know where her husband was, so she and her child are staying here. In the afternoon a little boy came with a bad foot; he and his mother were in hiding, and as his foot was bad he came here. He does not want to go away again, but that is an after consideration; he may not be allowed to stay.

"We hear shots in the direction of the town he has come from, but do not know yet what they mean. We are in no danger personally, and we can only trust that God Who led us here and has been so evidently with us in all times will not fail us now. We know He will not, neither will He let His work suffer; but for the present it is a long set-back, we are afraid.

"Just now we have plenty of food for the station folks, but we may have a little difficulty in that important matter."

CHAPTER XIII

LIFE AT KIBOKOLO—*continued*

“OCTOBER 20th, 1902. (To Mrs. J. Jenkyn Brown.)—I expect you will be surprised to hear from me so soon again. I want you to know of the events which have happened during the last fortnight, which have been a great blow to us, and, as far as we can see at present, to the work here.

“You will, I know, sympathise with us and pray that we may be guided aright in all we do, and that good may come out of even this seeming evil. It is so sad to think of all those poor things scattered like sheep and wandering about in the bush during this terribly wet weather. We hear that two have died already, and I am afraid they will not be the only ones. Three women with their little ones have sought refuge here, and are with us now. We have not been long enough here for the people to have the confidence in us which they had in Congo, or no doubt there would have been many more. All the towns about have taken a vow not to harbour the Kibokolo people, and the soldiers are on the look-out for the men to take prisoners. So far they have not succeeded in taking any. . . .

"As I write, further bad news has come that three towns which were spared have decided to go away. If so, we shall be left in the midst of a howling wilderness. We can only wait at present and pray for guidance."

"November 17th.—Tom is very busy building. There seems no end to building of one kind and another. You see here, where our houses only consist of three or four rooms, there are so many outbuildings needed to each house, besides chapel, carpenter's shed, blacksmith's shed, and stores. Now he is just going to build a dispensary. The old house which we have been using for that and a store combined, may come down any day in a heavy storm. Mr. Hooper's house is going on at the same time, and with these wonderfully industrious men I can tell you it is no joke.

"So many sad things seem to be happening everywhere. I am afraid our dear old B.M.S. is getting into hot water over these atrocities. I do think that the Congo State has been too much praised by some ; still it is absurd to suppose that any of our missionaries would condone brutality or injustice. Perhaps they have been slow to believe things which they have not seen themselves. Personally I never had any love for King Leopold or the State. I even prefer the easy-going Portuguese."

"February 20, 1903.—I had to leave off there the other night, so must try to finish now. Since then the old chief of this district came the other day, or rather sent to say that he was outside the station, and wanted Tom to go to him, as he had 'eaten nkisi' not to come in. Tom sent word that if he

wanted him he must come in, as he had nothing to do with his nkisi palavers. So he and the other men came just inside, to where our new house is, and had a long talk; but there is no doing anything with these people. They wanted us to guarantee that no Makela man should come any nearer than Nkil'a nkosi's town, and declared there would be no peace until Nkila and Nzanza (his fellow chief) were both killed; that until then they would not settle down, and the country would not be at rest.

"They are brimming over with revenge, and think of nothing else. A man named Luvumbu, the chief of a little town which was burnt, called Wembo, is now the head of all this district. He was the one who refused our 'chop' when all the chiefs promised us boys a long time ago when we first settled here. He professed to be tamed as regards having dealings with us, but the other day when Tom offered a tin of sardines each to the three chiefs, he refused one. Nearly everybody here is related to him, and he is the head cook in all witch palavers, so prospects are not very bright. I am afraid there is little chance of the regular people coming back here for a very long time. It is very disheartening, and just now we are so tied with one thing and another. Mr. Hooper is not well, we lack carriers, and the mules are ill, so that we cannot get about to the other towns as we should like to do. Even the nearest towns are difficult to reach this time of the year, as now the people do not clean the roads, and to walk through the wet grass means a good wetting and a good chance of fever. If the mules were well we could

get to those near. Then besides, Tom has his hands full with the new house and a brilliant lot of workmen, who mostly do nothing if he is not there; or if they do attempt anything it is pretty sure to have to be undone again. So you can see what a nice hole we are in at present. I hope things will change for the better before long, though as far as we can see they are not likely to."

"April 18th.—Certainly everything has been so far most disappointing, and disappointment is depressing here, for there is nothing to take it off. As soon as the rains cease and Mr. Bowskill has got into the station work, Tom and I hope to get out to the towns round about. We shall not be able to go far, as Mr. Bowskill will be alone, but there are very many towns we want to visit. We are also anxious to get some more children on the station. Just now the chiefs are at San Salvador, and we are anxiously awaiting their return. If they come back with everything settled we are going to have high jinks, a big feed for them and the station children and workmen. I think I told you J. P. and Mr. H. had a bull and cow between them. Well, the poor bull died, after which the cow took to wandering, and was away quite a long time. The other night she returned. Mr. H. means to shoot her for the feed. I need not say I shall not partake of it; but I suppose every one else will enjoy the beef. I daresay it is the kindest thing to do, for she is very lean, and not very happy, I should say."

"June 3rd. (Circular letter to children.)—It seems a long time since I wrote to you, but no doubt you

have read about us in the *Herald*, and have heard how all the towns close to our station were burnt down, so that the poor people had to run away. Some had friends in other towns to whom they could go, but many lived in the bush for several months, building themselves little shelters in the tall grass, so that no one might know where they were. A short time ago the Portuguese Governor sent word that they might return and build their towns, and live in peace if they would obey the laws, but the chiefs of the towns must first go to San Salvador and obtain permission of the magistrate there. At first they were very much frightened at the idea and did not like to go, but at last we persuaded the chief of the biggest town, Nzamba, to venture, and when he returned safe and sound the others consented to go also. Now it is the dry season, and they want to begin to build. They were much astonished at all they saw at San Salvador, and very pleased with their visit. All this has greatly interrupted our work. A very few people could come to listen to God's Word on Sundays, and those in the towns around were so frightened and restless that it was of little use our going to them.

"The witch doctors had passed a law that no children were to come to school, so if we asked any boy to come one day, the next he had run away and was nowhere to be found.

"Now, however, things are beginning to look brighter. When the people said they were coming back, we called the chiefs together and told them they must take away this law about school and allow any one to come who wished. We also said

we expected them to keep the promise they made a long time back, to bring us some boys to live on the station so that we might teach them good fashions. After a great deal of talk they agreed, and a few days after came with six boys, such funny little fellows—the eldest about eight, perhaps; but he, poor child, is an orphan and slightly crippled, his feet being deformed. He also has a skin disease which I hope to be able to cure in time. He has been badly neglected. His name is Nsumbi. Next to him is Nekiana; he is about seven, and is a bright, sharp boy, who, I think, will learn very quickly. Then comes Ntambu, about six years old, a good-tempered, lovable little fellow, but a little inclined to be lazy and dirty. The three others are about four and five years of age—such little mites! At first I said they ought to be with their mothers, but when we were told they had none we consented to take them. Their names are Nzingula, Nzuzi, Muntu; their poor little fingers and toes have been badly eaten by ‘jiggers,’ the nasty little insects of which some of you have heard; but I hope soon they will be quite well. You see they are all little, so we hope to be able to teach them many things, and that when they know more about Jesus, they will begin to love Him and try to please Him. They all go to school, and the two elder ones have already learnt their A B C.

“So far I have not been able to get any Zombo girls either to school or to live with us. There are many nice little girls about who come sometimes for medicine, and some of them would like very much to come into the station. A woman told me

the other day that her child wanted to come and she would like her to, but I am afraid the man to whom she belongs will not let her. The girls here are betrothed when quite babies to old men who have money to buy them. These men do not like them to learn, because they are afraid if they do they will not want to be their wives when they grow up. No doubt that would be so. However, I am in hopes of getting my first Zombo girl in this week. The chief of Nzamba has promised to bring me some girls, and I believe he is trying to get them; but he owns a number of little girls and does not like to give them up, and the other people are just the same; because in this land little girls are articles that can be bought and sold just like pigs or goats. It seems so sad that nice little children should be sacrificed in this way; that is why we are so anxious to get them to school, so that when they grow up they may know better.

"There are so many dreadful customs here which make us feel very sad, and we know that it is only the light of the gospel of Jesus which can dispel the darkness and give these people the desire to live differently.

"I want you all, especially those of you who love Jesus, to pray with us for these Zombo boys and girls, that very soon a great many may come to school, and there learn to read the Word of God and to love the dear Saviour who died for us all."

Toward the end of July, Mr. and Mrs. Cameron came from Wathen to spend a few weeks at Kibokolo. This visit was especially welcome to Mrs. Lewis, as Mrs. Cameron was one of her old

Camden Road friends, and though younger by a good many years, it is still true that she and Mrs. Lewis were at school together. The friendship had been maintained, and the reunion in Zombo was no small joy and refreshment to both. The visitors made holiday, but busy holiday. The work of the Station went on, and Mr. Cameron accompanied Mr. Lewis upon an eight days' journey of itineration. The interest of the happy intercourse at Kibokolo was deepened by the arrival of Mr. Bentley before the Camerons left, and Mrs. Lewis records her happiness in his presence and her concern for his health. Indeed, all three of her visitors were ill and required nursing during their stay, which was prolonged in consequence. On August 27 they all departed, having given and received cheer.

“September 11th.—Of course we had a big day when they (Mr. and Mrs. Bowskill) arrived; and the same week we had other visitors: the Governor of Cabinda, the Resident from San Salvador, the Resident from Makela, and another white man with them. The Governor seems a very nice man, and we hope that his visit will result in good to the people. Tom told him exactly how matters stood, and how the soldiers behaved when they came to the towns; also how Nkil'a nkosi used the Resident's name in terrorising these folk. The Governor sent for Nkila, who came in style with all his followers. He also sent for the people and chiefs of these towns and had a long talk with them; told them that they must live in peace and that they were to send their children to school, so that they might learn good ways

and be able to read, and that if any one came to trouble them, they might tie him up, and send him to San Salvador and on to Cabinda. They were all very polite and tried not to give trouble; but you can imagine I had a busy time of it, having eight to sit down to table. They were here one night only and two days. They looked at the ground and were supposed to measure it, but accepted Tom's measurements. We are very glad they have been. Nlekai is still with us. He is to leave in a fortnight. We shall miss him very much, he has been such a help. By that time the B.'s will be settled in their own house and we shall be able to start work regularly again. I hope you will see Mr. Hooper while he is at home. Is it not a trial for poor John Pinnock, having to leave his wife at home so soon? I am sorry for them both."

"October 11th.—To-day we have opened the first chapel in Zomboland. Tom, Nlekai & Co. have been hard at work for the last three weeks putting it up, and it looks so nice. Iron walls with four windows, shutters on each side, two doors, grass roof and a platform. On the platform to-day was our travelling table, covered with the cloth which you and Alice gave me when at home, I think, my harmonium, Mr. Bowskill as organist, and the four of us. The school children were just in front. We had been busy practising hymns, as we wanted to make it a big day as well as we could. We sent round to all the chiefs, but without much success; only Nem-bamba, the chief of Kimfuti Nkusu, arrived. Some of them say they are coming next Sunday

instead, as they had a funeral going on, but!—we shall see. Still we had a good time. The children sang very nicely, each of us gave a short address, and all repeated the Commandments together. The people listened very attentively; Tom and Mr. B. both led in prayer, and we can only hope and pray that some word may have fallen into good ground and bring forth fruit in days and years to come.”

In February, 1904, in the course of an itineration, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis arrived at Kimpemba, where they met Mr. Bentley. The story of the meeting is briefly told by Mrs. Lewis as follows: “Kimpemba, February 15, 1904. There is a chance of sending, so I am just writing the latest news. We arrived here Saturday, 13th, and found Mr. Bentley, who had been suffering from influenza. He was up, but that night went to bed in fever, and is not up yet. His cough is bad. It is awkward here with no proper house, bed, or other comforts. Fortunately we have plenty of fowls. Expecting to be back in less than a fortnight, we did not bring much with us. Of course we shall not leave Mr. Bentley until he is fairly well, and fit to return. Tom and I have a little neuralgia, but are quite well. 17th.—Mr. B. is decidedly better.”

“Kibokolo, March 7. I wrote you a card when we were at Kimpemba, telling you how ill Mr. Bentley was. I am glad to say he got fairly well before we left, and was able to proceed on his journey, but he is very shaky, though awfully plucky. I do hope he will go home soon. I did my best to persuade him, but he said there was this thing and the other which he must do first.

Still he acknowledged that he must go as soon as possible, as he did not wish to throw away his life. We spent six days there and were very glad to have a little time with him, although we were only able to have chop together one day. He was asking about you all."

"March 25, 1904. (To Miss Ethel Percival.)—You would love the little birds here! on a fine day there are crowds. Sweet little palm birds, soft brown, with lovely blue breasts, and the dancing birds—the cocks with long tail feathers, some six inches long, and very handsome black and white plumage, and their little brown mates—dance a kind of jig while on the wing. This is a regular bird paradise, for no gun, arrow, or missile of any kind is allowed to be used within our part of the station. I am afraid dear Sandy sometimes makes a meal of poultry, but he usually confines himself to rats, of which there is an abundant supply, and he never touches the chickens or ducks which are all running about. Some of our English chickens hatched here are very fine birds, and the ducks do well too. But I try not to take too much interest in them individually, because you see some of them have to be eaten eventually. Dear Dombe is growing, but I do not think he will be a big donkey. He is much petted, and I think enjoys his little self. He does not like Sundays, for his friends then retire to the chapel for very long periods, he thinks. He welcomes them rapturously on their return.

"I have been very busy this week sewing and writing. It was no use to go into the town for

there are two funerals proceeding, and the people are too busy and excited with drink and dancing to listen to anything. Then it is Mrs. Bowskill's week for school—we take it week about—so I have taken the opportunity to answer some of the letters which have been waiting for replies. Then too I am writing a catechism for little children on the Life of Our Lord, which is getting on.”

“July 10th.—I think I told you in my last that I am taking school in the morning now, boys and girls together. There are thirty-six in all. I quite enjoy having a respectable school again. I like school teaching better than any work, I think, when I am well. Then with the medicine, house, girls' work and small boys to see to in the afternoon I am pretty busy, as you may imagine. Between whiles Tom and I do just a little gardening, so as to keep some fresh vegetable going (that is mostly my department); Tom is growing vines and roses. So between us we are getting a few things about the station. Then there are the services for Tom on Sunday, and prayers every morning in chapel, and my class on Sunday afternoons for all young folks on station, when they learn portions of Scripture by rote to repeat to me, and a class of big boys on Wednesday evenings, whom I am taking through the Acts. So though sadly behind in visiting and itineration we are working for the future, and trust and pray that some of the young folk may prove to be blessings in their towns in the years to come.”

“February, 1905. (Circular letter to children.)—It is rather a long time since I wrote to you about

the work here, but I have no doubt you read the *Herald* and so know a little of how we are going on. This is such a very dark spot, and the saddest part is that now the True Light has come into their midst the people still prefer darkness. Night after night we can hear them shouting and dancing at their fetish palavers. When any one falls sick they say it is caused by an evil spirit, and all the friends of the sick person assemble after dark to drive it away by charms and incantations, accompanied by singing and dancing. The next day they will solemnly tell us that they saw the spirit go away into the darkness, although the patient is no better and oftener than not dies.

“Yet in a few cases the light is beginning to pierce the gloom; some are wishing to learn, and what I think is even more hopeful, some—very few at present—of the men are beginning to want their wives and children taught. For the last six months all the workmen on the station have been attending day or night school, and at Christmas-time some of them came and said they saw that we—the missionaries’ wives—were not happy because the women did not come to be taught, so they were going to make an effort to get them, as they wanted their wives to learn. They made a feast, to which they invited all the chiefs and headmen, and told them that now they themselves went to school and knew there was no witch palaver in it, so they must not prevent the women from coming. The chiefs agreed to this, and the following Monday when we began school after the holidays two women and a little girl came. These two have long wished to come, but were prevented

by the superstition of their husbands and relatives. Others came afterwards, so now we have eleven besides the nine girls who live with us on the station, and we hope many more will come since they have made a beginning. They are not stupid. Four have already learnt their letters, and I was surprised yesterday at the slate of 'a's' written by one of them from the blackboard. She had a child in her arms, and had never attempted a stroke until she came to school.

"They are very wild and dirty and not at all inviting-looking, but it is wonderful to see how gradually, almost imperceptibly, they are getting into order and how well they learn to say the text with which we close school.

"On Sunday afternoons I have started a class for any girls or women who will come, and I get from five to fifteen besides the station girls. Some of these are older women who do not come to day school. They learn a text, and then I tell them as simply as I can something about Jesus. Some of them listen very well, and I want you all to join in praying for these Zombo women and girls that many more may come to be taught, and that those who do come may learn to love and follow the Saviour.

"A week or two ago my husband and I went out for a visit to some of the towns to the north of this place. In some we were well received, as we had visited them before when we first came to Zombo. In one group of towns in particular we were able to make friends and have some nice talks with the people. In one town there were several sick folk, who were glad of medicine, and



BRIDGE OVER LUSENGELE STREAM NEAR COMBER STATION, KIBOKOLO.

in the same town there was one woman who had just lost her daughter, another who had a little baby, and both of these seemed to like to listen to what I told them about the great God Who made us all and loves us.

"One day a rather tiresome incident occurred, although we cannot help laughing when we think of it now. We wanted to go to a place called Kidia, which is on the other side of the Nkisi river. This is a fine river and too deep to ford; the only way of crossing is in a large canoe, which is kept there as a ferry. We crossed, but found the district most miserable; the people and the houses all seemed dead or dying, so we did not stay there long, but returned to the river at another place, as we wished to come back by a different route altogether.

"We got to a wretched little town early in the morning, and as the people did not seem friendly, and there was not a decent house in the place, we decided to cross the river and go another way. When we arrived at the ferry the canoe was on the farther bank and the ferryman nowhere to be seen. The carriers called and shouted for about an hour, when two boys came down to bring the canoe over, but when they saw Mr. Lewis they fled, and as we heard afterwards, went and told the townsfolk there was 'something' on the opposite bank, not a man at all! We sat and waited, hoping they would bring their master, as our men called after them to do, but hour after hour passed and still no one came. At last one of our young men, the only one who could, swam across; but when he

attempted to punt the canoe, he only fell over into the water, so the men called to him to go into the town and fetch the ferryman. We waited another hour and a half, when the boy returned, saying he could find neither town nor people. So there was nothing for it but to go back to the little town we had left in the morning. We were very weary, for we had taken nothing but some biscuits and milk all day, and had not been able to rest at all between the hot sun in the open space by the river, and the insects when we retreated into the shade. The people were very angry when they saw us coming back; they thought we had been driven away from somewhere, and suggested that if we had only waited till dark, 'the devil would have taken us over.' We got the best house we could; but there was hardly room for our beds in the one place in the middle where the roof was whole, and we had hardly got them up before a tremendous storm came on. The next morning we went back to the ferry by which we had previously crossed and got over all right."

In 1908 Mr. Lewis read a paper before the Royal Geographical Society in London, entitled "The Ancient Kingdom of Kongo." It was illustrated by splendid photographs, and received with enthusiasm. I was present, and can testify to the heartiness of the cheer given by the audience for Mrs. Lewis, who had been her husband's fellow-traveller. The following passage

is taken from this paper, which was printed in the *Geographical Journal* for June, 1908:—

“Two years ago (August to October, 1905), in company with my wife (who has always travelled with me, and assisted me in my observations for some twenty years), I made a journey through Nkusu into Mbamba, visiting on my way the celebrated, but now abandoned, copper mines at Mbembe.

“The Nkusu district is the most populous I have visited in the whole of my journeyings through Northern Angola. The villages are numerous, and the inhabitants generally seemed to be strong and healthy. I always judge of the prosperity of the country by the area of land under cultivation. The extensive plantations of manioc, maize, beans, sweet potatoes, and other native products point to the inhabitants being industrious and prosperous. The Nkusu folk also engage in trade like all the other tribes, and spend much of their time away in the rubber market. This being a free trade in Portuguese Congo the natives make good profit by it. The highest altitude I have registered on the plateau is in this district, being 3,600 feet above sea-level.

“I cannot help comparing this district with that of Kidia, on the east side of the Nkisi, where we passed through some of the most wretched villages I ever saw. There was hardly a hut fit for any human being to live in, and all were in a tumble-down condition. The people were ill-fed and dirty, and the children—the few I saw—were feeding on palm-nuts and raw manioc. We came to two

villages close to each other, and found that all the inhabitants had died of sleep-sickness. The carriers entered some of the huts and saw the bodies of two or three in the last stages of decomposition on the floor. These were possibly abandoned by the small remnant who had fled before this terrible scourge of Central Africa.

"It was, therefore, an agreeable change to travel day after day among a bright and prosperous tribe of people. But even there we came across some disagreeable scenes and cruel customs. One day we arrived at a village where they were just preparing the body of a woman for burial in the Lueka River close by. Our carriers, always attracted by a funeral feast, went to look on, and one of the lads ran back to tell us that they were going to bury a four-days-old baby with the mother. I hastened to the spot just in time to see the grandmother pulling a native cord and fastening the living babe to the neck of the dead mother. Amidst great confusion and wild protests I rescued the child out of her hands and carried it to my wife. It only lived, however, ten days, but we remember with horror that the child had been left for twenty-four hours to suck at the breast of a dead woman. The burying of infants with their dead mothers is a common practice through the whole Congo region, except where there are missionaries or Government officials to stop it. I have heard of one father who reared his motherless child with native beer (*mbamvu*) and palm wine, but I know of no other case outside the members of Christian communities."

In the course of this journey Mr. and Mrs. Lewis visited Mabaya, a new station far south of San Salvador, recently founded by Mr. and Mrs. Cameron. Their coming had been eagerly expected, and was warmly welcomed. They were delighted with the progress their friends had made in so short a time, and in the following letter Mrs. Lewis gives a brief account of the visit:—

“Mabaya, September 17th. We have been here nearly a week. . . . We found Josephine fairly well though rather depressed, for Mr. Cameron had been very unwell and she was very anxious about him. His health is not at all satisfactory. He has been left far too long without a colleague, and when the Kirklands come there ought to be a third man very soon, in case the Camerons have to return. They are holding on bravely here, doing with the minimum of comforts to save transport, and the work seems decidedly promising. The people here are more like San Salvador folk than are our wild creatures in Zombo. Josephine has three meetings for women; that in the near town is very good, and the women are learning to sing quite nicely. To-day we are assisting at the opening of the new chapel, a very nice, large grass structure—not quite finished. Tom and I are to speak this afternoon (Sunday), and to-morrow night Tom is to show a magic lantern. Then, on Tuesday, we start homewards by a different route. I shall write a circular letter about our journey, so I must not write about it now. I had a nasty fall from my hammock which might have been serious. It delayed us a day, and kept me from doing anything for

several days. I am thankful to say the effects have passed off without any permanent damage, though I have reminders now and then."

"November 14th. (To Mrs. J. Jenkyn Brown.)—We have had a most discouraging year with regard to the work here. It seems like a blank wall of superstition and wickedness, and were it not that we know that there is nothing impossible to God we might well despair. We have been here now more than five years, and seem to make very little headway. I do hope the women's meetings I have just begun will be maintained. I have not been able to get them hitherto, so that is a step in the right direction. Also, the women are coming better now to school, but the boys' school is so interrupted by the constant demands for carriers from the Portuguese authorities, who are simply recruiting agents for the traders. At 'women's meetings' so far, I have had a number of boys and girls and a few men as well, but I am glad to get any one who will listen. The Sunday services are a little better attended lately, but the numbers are still small."

In January, 1906, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis attended the United Conference of Congo Missionaries at Kinshasa, Stanley Pool, to which Mr. Lawson Forfeitt brought the heavy news of the death of Dr. Holman Bentley. The following passage is from a letter dated Kibokolo, February 3rd:—

"The ladies were a good deal to the fore in the meetings and there were several papers read, and discussions in which we all took part, about women's work. Then the ladies had two close meetings to talk over private matters with regard

to the time for these girls to marry, &c., &c. These were felt to be most helpful, especially to the younger ones among us, who were quite surprised at many of the customs which we older ones could tell them of. I certainly feel now that the time was not wasted which I spent up there, for they said I had taught them many things with regard to women's work here which they could not have learned otherwise. I was very glad to have some talks with Dr. Catherine Mabie of Banza Manteka, on medical matters. She is so nice, and so are Dr. Leslie and his wife. Their little boy, ten months old, was with them. Then all other sides of the work were discussed and many papers read. On Sunday morning we met for a memorial service for Dr. Bentley, when Mr. Grenfell gave such a beautiful address. After that we all sang a hymn I chose, which seemed to me so specially appropriate,

“ ‘ Captain and Saviour of the host
Of Christian Chivalry,
We thank Thee for our comrade true,
Now summoned up to Thee.’ ”

“ Then we had the Conference sermon by Mr. Harvey, and in the afternoon a native service, Mr. Richards preaching in Congo and Mr. James Clark in Bobangi, and finally a united communion service.

“ All except our own people left on Monday. We had to stay for our local committee.”

“ February 19th, I was very disappointed with the *Baptist Times* article about Dr. Bentley. There is no proper account of the funeral. In the

editorial note it says, and Charles Williams repeats it, that he had finished translating the Bible. That is not correct, and we are all so grieved about it. Arrangements are now being made for its completion. Then, to crown all the blunders, C. Williams in writing about the commencement of the Mission speaks of the four noble men, Grenfell, Bentley, Comber and Crudgington! leaving out John altogether. I think it is too bad in the official organ. I hoped that Harry Crudgington might see the latter error and correct it. I wonder if you noticed it. Of course it does not matter really, for the Master knows all the faithful workers, but still the younger generation ought to know the names of those who lived and died for Christ and Congo. We are indeed thankful for Dr. Bentley's life and work. His place cannot be filled. Although we disagreed with some of his plans we were always pleased to see him and to talk with him; and we are so glad that we had that week with him, two years ago, when he was ill. Poor Mrs. Bentley and the children: they must feel his loss sadly. Mrs. Bentley's whole life will be changed. Their photograph came out as a New Year's card, and it seemed like a farewell from our old friend and colleague. He looked so young in it."

"July 8th. (To Mrs. J. Jenkyn Brown).—We hope to leave for home in January, as we feel it would not be wise to attempt to stay another bad season here. So we do hope a new man for Mabaya will hurry up. We had purposed to stay another year, but that is out of the question now. We enjoyed the Grahams' visit very much, though

so short, and while they were here we had our first baptism—not a Zombo, that joy is yet to come; but a girl who has been with me four years, and has been the greatest comfort to us all for the last two. We went down singing to the beautiful little river at the bottom of the Mission grounds, a good many Zombos coming too, to see what we were about. Tom and Mr. P. had “throats” so Mr. Graham conducted the service and then Tom baptized. Afterwards we went into our chapel and sat down to the Lord’s Table, together with a few Christians from San Salvador. While they were here Mrs. Graham went with me to my women’s meetings in two towns just a little way off. She was so amused with the women here; she had never seen such a wild lot.”

“August 3rd.—We are both fairly well but rather overdone. You will feel as grieved as we do to hear of dear Mr. Grenfell’s death, and so soon after Dr. Bentley’s. We were much surprised when we heard he was hopelessly ill, as he seemed quite well in January, though very sorrowful and downhearted. All this trouble with the State and then Dr. Bentley’s death greatly upset him. We can ill spare either of them, so it seems to us, but God knows best. Mr. Grenfell was a really good man and so humble and meek. May we have grace to follow him so far as he followed Christ!”

“August 22nd.—Just now we have with us a Christian woman from San Salvador Church. She is a wife of ‘Noso,’ the old chief of Mbanza Mputu, our old friend. Ditina is an old friend of mine

too, and has been a Christian for many years. She would have been a deacon long ago but that she is a co-wife. She is a splendid worker, and we thought she might be able to get at those whom we cannot reach. She has been here a week nearly now, and has been out every day making friends and talking to the people. She will be here for about three weeks longer. Then in October we hope to have Nlekai to go over with me the second part of 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' which I am translating. I hope he will be able to come."

CHAPTER XIV

A MISSION OF MERCY

IT has long ago been clear to the sympathetic reader that Mrs. Lewis was a woman of exceptional determination and heroic courage. In the late spring of 1904 occurred a series of events in which, according to the judgment of her friends, these qualities were revealed in supreme degree. A cry of distress came from San Salvador, which her loyal and affectionate heart interpreted as imperious, and in one of the wildest rainy seasons, when natives would only take the round under compulsion, she made the journey of something like one hundred miles *alone*.

In April, 1902, the Rev. Arthur Mayo joined the Mission at Matadi, and a few months later passed on to San Salvador, his destined sphere of service. In May, 1903, he went down to Matadi to meet Miss Sygrave, who had come out from England to be his wife. They were married on May 17th, and shortly afterwards Mr. Mayo resumed his work in San Salvador, happily supported by his wife, who had been specially trained as a teacher. At this time Mr. and Mrs. Graham and Mr. Phillips were also in San Salvador, but the Grahams left for

England in September, and Mr. Phillips for Matadi before Christmas. Meanwhile Mr. and Mrs. Wooding had arrived, and the two missionaries and their wives maintained the service of the station with no more than the usual vicissitudes until, in March, 1904, Mr. Wooding was stricken down by serious fever. The case was obstinate and assumed a very grave aspect. It happened that the Portuguese Resident was ill at the same time, so a messenger was despatched to Matadi requesting advice from the doctor there.

A few days later news arrived that the messenger had been killed by an elephant, and under this final blow Mr. Mayo, overstrained by work and anxiety for his colleague, staggered and went down. When the fatal message was delivered he said, "I am ill, too," and went to bed. So the two wives were occupied in nursing their sick husbands, for Mr. Wooding's obstinate fever still burned. For fourteen nights Mrs. Mayo sat up with her husband. Happily Nlekai and Vita were on the spot and rendered good service, Nlekai's ministry being notably gentle, skilled, and welcome. As Mr. Mayo's case grew graver, Mr. Wooding, still in fever, dragged himself from his bed to render assistance to his colleague, whose case was heavier than his own. The trouble deepened. Mr. Mayo's temperature rose to 106°·8, and he fell into delirium. It was obvious that unless relief came there would be general collapse; and in the extremity, not without compunction, for it was one of the worst and deadliest of Congo seasons, Mr. Wooding wrote to Kibokolo begging Mr. and Mrs. Lewis to come over and help.

Now at this time Mr. and Mrs. Bowskill were staying at Kibokolo, and Mrs. Bowskill was in delicate health. It was at once felt impossible that she and her husband, new to the place and people, should be left alone in that wild region. Therefore Mr. or Mrs. Lewis must needs go alone. Of course Mr. Lewis wished to go; but his wife said, "No, this is a woman's business. Whatever happens to poor Mr. Mayo, Mrs. Mayo will be at the end of her tether. She will want a woman's comfort and a woman's nursing. I must go." And when Mrs. Lewis said "I must," her friends knew that they were confronted by finality, and she had her way.

Her little caravan was hurriedly loaded, and on Sunday afternoon, just twenty-four hours after receiving the summons, she started on her venturesome journey. Mr. Lewis accompanied her some few miles on her way; and the parting would not be without emotion, as during the seventeen years of her Congo life she had never been separated from her husband for more than the briefest period of time.

By one of those mischances which every biographer has to deplore, the letter in which she wrote a more or less detailed account of her journey has been lost, and I can only supply the brief records of her diary. In following these the reader will remember that it was the season of heavy rains and wild tempests; rivers were in flood; rank grass from twelve to twenty feet high overhung and obstructed the track in many parts; the track stretched to a hundred miles, and in covering it this frail Englishwoman, worn with many years

of strenuous African life, but for her rough, dispirited, apprehensive native carriers, was alone.

"Saturday, April 16th.—Just at half-past one, as we were ready for dinner, two men arrived from Congo (San Salvador) with letter from Mr. Wooding begging for help. Mr. Mayo very ill and all knocked up. Decided that I should go. Very busy all afternoon packing."

"Sunday, 17th.—Breakfast very late. All morning arranging things for road, and for those left behind. Started at 1.45. Tom came to Nzinda. Road very bad in parts; slippery and grass trying. Arrived at Mbawa at 5 p.m. After 'chop' and prayers, and writing a few lines to Tom and Bessie, went to bed early."

"Monday, 18th.—Wanted sleep so badly last night but was kept awake by a wretched bititi (a native musical instrument) till very late. Rain all night; storm early this morning; rain continuing till 10.30. Headache; took phenacetin; read 'Weir of Hermeston' a little. This afternoon sent forward to prospect, but Lupunde (river) impassable, so had to stay the whole day. Awfully tedious. A funeral here. Wrote a little to Tom. After prayers early to bed."

"Tuesday, 19th.—Started at 6.50; very bad road; did not get to Nkamba till 11.50. Started again at 1.40. Made very quick march to Tadi, arriving at 3.57. Wrote to Tom. At Nkamba, mail-man overtook us. Letters from Tom; all well."

"Wednesday, 20th.—Got to Nkanka to lunch—Fwese to sleep, arriving at about 3.35. All very wet when we got in. Had to change, &c. No harm, but awkward for to-morrow."

“Thursday, 21st.—First dried all things. Started at 10.30. Did not reach Nkwimba (Zeka Town) till 2.45. Hesitated about going on, but big storm of rain compelled us to stay. Wrote up diary and letters to Tom. Cannot get a fowl.”

“Friday, 22nd.—Started at 8.5. Found no town at Zamba, so ‘chopped’ by stream and went on. Caught in big storm; arrived at Mwinga 6.45, awfully tired. Found Vita with some clothes, and ‘chop,’ and note from Woodings. Got into bed, after ‘chop,’ as soon as possible.”

Saturday, 23rd.—Started at 7.40. ‘Chopped’ at Kintina. Weather very bad. *Had to wade Luanza [river]*. Arrived at San Salvador about 5 p.m. Very kind welcome. Mrs. Mayo keeping up well. Wrote to Tom. Up very late talking.”

On the day before her arrival, Mrs. Lewis had learned from Vita at Mwinga that she was too late to aid in nursing Mr. Mayo. He had passed away on Wednesday, the 20th, when she was but half-way on her journey of mercy. Of course she was much exhausted when she reached San Salvador, though perhaps her exhaustion was most intense on the Friday, when she confesses herself to be “awfully tired.” The much-abused word “awfully” is perhaps used legitimately in this case, for she admitted afterwards to Mrs. Graham that there were moments in that day during which she thought she would die before she got through. Her carriers too were so utterly spent that they sank down on the verandah of Mr. Wooding’s house and remained for hours without moving.

For some days Mrs. Mayo kept up, despite the terrific strain to which she had been subjected, and Mrs. Lewis was free to throw herself into the work of the Mission, which she did with keenest interest. Difficult palavers taxed her patience and her wisdom. Inquirers were seen, medicine given out, and on the Sunday, eight days after her arrival, the diary records:—

“I took the women’s meeting; a crowd; and they all seemed pleased to see me.”

Mrs. Mayo (now Mrs. Kirkland)—to whom I am indebted for many of the facts embodied in the remainder of this chapter, and for some already recorded—inform me that this women’s meeting was quite a memorable gathering. The demonstrations of respect and affection on the part of the audience were most touching. These black women clung about their friend and former teacher, and received her words with enthusiasm and with meekness. And the meekness was as great a tribute as the enthusiasm. For Mrs. Lewis had heard that some of them were not “walking worthily,” and though she spoke the truth to them in love, she spoke the truth unsparingly, giving them a sound and wholesome lecture. On the same day the thing foreseen happened, and Mrs. Mayo went down with fever. For several days Mrs. Lewis was occupied in nursing her friend. Then Mrs. Wooding became ill and there was more nursing.

It was early apparent to Mrs. Lewis that Mrs. Mayo ought to start for England without delay, and, as other escort was not available, she determined herself to take her to Matadi. The caravan

was loaded, and on Monday, May 16th, the two ladies started for the coast. On the second day out they met Diamanama with mails, who said that the Lunda river, which lay immediately before them, was impassable for carriers.

That evening their plight was pitiable. Lodged in a hut just big enough to accommodate their two camp-beds, Mrs. Mayo weak from fever, Mrs. Lewis aware that her turn was coming, heavy rain blown into their miserable shelter by a wild wind, a flooded river awaiting them on the morrow, too dispirited for conversation, they sat down each on her camp-bed, and "had a good long cry." Though the pity of God, Who knoweth our frame, was not withheld from them, the sky gave no hint of it; for with the night came a fierce tropical thunderstorm. When at last they got to sleep they were attacked by driver ants, and had to make a hasty midnight flitting. Another poor shelter was procured, and in the morning they went down to see the Lunda. In truth they did not see it. The river had overflowed its banks, and before they had got through the long grass, to its normal margin, they were in deepening water. A colloquy with the head-carrier ensued. Mrs. Lewis stoutly said, "We will go across." The laconic and conclusive answer was: "But your boxes will not." Human will is a mystic and incalculable force, and often achieves miracles; but when its immediate organ is the frail body of an exhausted woman, it cannot lift the dead weight of a passively resistant caravan. There was but one thing to be done. They retraced their steps to San Salvador.

I give the record of Mrs. Lewis's diary for several days :—

“Thursday, May 19th.—Arrived back at San Salvador this evening awfully tired.

“Friday, 20th.—Feeling very queer.

“Saturday, 21st.—In bed with fever, bad.

“Sunday, 22nd.—In bed with fever, rather bad. Bessie (Mrs. Mayo) is nursing me.

“Monday, 23rd.—Sat up to-day. Normal all day.

“Tuesday, 24th.—Loaded and arranged caravan this morning. Feeling a bit queer, but much better.

“Wednesday, 25th.—Started, went to Kintina.”

A few words of comment upon these entries are perhaps called for. The reader will wonder why Mrs. Lewis, just up from fever, made so much haste to depart upon the long, trying journey to Kibokolo. The cause of her haste was her concern for Mrs. Mayo. She felt that her young friend must not be allowed to remain a day longer than was absolutely necessary amid the scenes of her recent suffering and sorrow. Her nerves were perilously overstrained; she could not sleep, and Mrs. Lewis judged that the journey to Kibokolo, with its inevitable hardships, would be far preferable to a prolonged stay in San Salvador. In her own home, too, she would be naturally able to give, with fuller freedom and competency, the careful, sympathetic treatment which the case required. So on the day after her recovery from fever, and while still “feeling a bit queer,” Mrs. Lewis “loaded and arranged the caravan.” And these words are to be taken literally. It was a man's job, but masculine help being unavailable at the

moment, in her determination to get away quickly Mrs. Lewis did it herself.

From Wednesday, May 25th, to Tuesday, 31st, the diary is blank. The journey yielded no incidents of special moment. The usual discomforts were endured, aggravated by the inexperience of the hammock bearers. On May 31st occurs this entry :—

“Met Tom on the Nyanza. All came in together this afternoon. ‘Chopped’ at Bowskills.”

Mr. Lewis was returning from a vain journey to Tumba. When Mrs. Lewis was starting from San Salvador to escort Mrs. Mayo to the coast, she wrote to her husband, informing him of her project, saying also that in returning she purposed to take the train from Matadi to Tumba, and asking him to meet her there and accompany her home. Turned back from the flooded Lunda, she wrote again, hoping to be able to prevent his setting out. The second message arrived too late.

The question naturally arises: If Mrs. Lewis could not consent to her husband's leaving Kibokolo to accompany her to San Salvador, how was it she felt able to ask him to meet her at Tumba? One can only surmise either that less anxious conditions at home made his short absence feasible, or that she foresaw that her own probable exhaustion would make his escort necessary, even at some risk.

A fortnight later Mr. John Pinnock arrived at Kibokolo, and took Mrs. Mayo to the coast, whence she sailed for England. At home her health and vigour were happily restored. Later, she was married to Mr. Kirkland, with whom she has

since rendered excellent service to the Mission in the Congo region.

It goes without saying that the woman who did and dared so much for her in time of trouble, is remembered by Mrs. Kirkland with intense and reverent affection. But it is important to add that she regards her lamented and devoted friend as an ideal missionary, whose wisdom and efficiency were as great as her affectionate devotion. Moreover, Mrs. Kirkland likes to think that she is not the only woman missionary on the Congo who endeavours to prosecute her work according to the plans and methods of one whose life was a model and whose memory is an inspiration.

CHAPTER XV

LAST FURLOUGH

IN the middle of September, 1906, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis were busy at Kibokolo making plans for future work, and entertaining no thought of immediate return to England. Mr. Lewis had been ill, but was well again, and was on the point of starting for a local journey. Mrs. Lewis was expecting the arrival of Nlekai, to aid her in finishing and correcting a translation of the second part of "The Pilgrim's Progress." Yet, on November 9th, they were in the English Channel, aboard the ss. *Bruxellesville*, and Mr. Lewis wrote as follows to Mr. Wilson:—

"You will be surprised to hear that Mrs. Lewis and I are nearing England. When the last Antwerp mails left Congo we had no intention of returning so soon. Our letters had scarcely been posted when I went down with bilious fever, the second attack within a month; and as I have been suffering from repeated attacks since January, we decided to leave at once. We were able to take this step when Mr. Hooper returned to Zombo from Mabaya, without seriously crippling the work at Kibokolo. He arrived ten days before

we left. At Matadi I saw Dr. Sims, who said that I had been suffering from continued fever for some time, and, to my astonishment, that I was in fever at the time of his examination. I think I am getting rid of it. Indeed, after a week at sea I felt comparatively well, and am now myself again. My wife is much run down and tired. We hope to reach Southampton to-morrow (Saturday) morning, and to proceed at once to London. We shall call to see you on Monday morning."

This call was duly made, and later in the same week there ensued the necessary interview with Dr. Habershon, the physician of the B.M.S. Dr. Habershon reported that the illness which had sent Mr. Lewis home was "subsiding," but felt moved by his study of both their cases to make representations to the Committee concerning the advisability of shortening the term of residence on the Congo between furloughs.

Late in December Mrs. Lewis was called upon to endure a great sorrow. Childless herself, her sister's children had ever been dear to her, and became dearer as the years passed, and intercourse and mutual kindness strengthened the ties of nature and of spiritual affinity. Moreover, one of them, Eva, was called to the discipline of pain, lingering, long drawn out.

Not more than a year or two after that radiant holiday at Penmaemawr, referred to in a previous chapter, Eva Percival, a beautiful and winsome girl, suffered from the first slight assaults of a mysterious nervous malady which defied the treatment and even baffled the diagnosis of the best physicians of the day. For ten years, with fluctua-

tions and intervals of hopeful improvement, her trouble grew upon her, until at last, after much anguish, endured with the patience and the sweetness of a saint, it quenched her life.

When Mr. and Mrs. Lewis arrived in this country Eva's case was grave, and her aunt was continually with her. Shortly before Christmas, Mr. Lewis was sent to Edinburgh to make close personal inquiry concerning the critical illness of the Rev. George Cameron, and to convey the sympathy of the Committee. It was felt that his presence and the loving messages which he bore might be elements of help to one who lay in extreme weakness. But while Mr. Lewis was in Edinburgh there occurred a sudden change for the worse in the case of his niece, Eva, scarcely less dear to him than to his wife. He was called back to London by telegram, and she died the next day.

In the presence of such facts the mystery of pain is so exigent that it compels us to assume a simple solution. The spiritual force expended, and the spiritual peace acquired, in the brave endurance of such affliction *must* have their mission and their future. God is not a prodigal Father Who wastes His substance in random ordinances; and what is there, in all the sum of His known belongings, more precious than such a soul as that of Eva Percival?

Despite the consolations of the Evangel, the natural grief of her mother and her sisters was very great, shared to the full by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, whose presence and sympathy yielded the best earthly comfort. And there were those, themselves among the number, who felt that it was a

kindly dispensation of Providence which had brought them home for such a time as this.

Shortly after the commencement of the new year, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis were able to undertake deputation work, and early in March, while away from London on this business, Mr. Lewis received a momentous letter from the Secretary of the B.M.S., the Rev. C. E. Wilson, conveying the request of the Committee that he would accept the appointment of B.M.S. tutor, at the projected United Training Institute, on the Lower Congo, with the understanding that Mrs. Lewis would take the educational and general oversight of the women, wives of the students, who would reside with their husbands at the Institute during term time. Confessedly reluctant to abandon pioneering and forward work, for which he had striven specially to qualify himself, Mr. Lewis was so impressed by the importance of the new scheme that he could not decline the invitation. Meanwhile he asked for time, that he might consult his colleagues on the Congo; for gratifying as was the confidence of the Committee, he could not regard the proposed position as tenable, unless the brethren on the field approved.

As the story of the remainder of Mrs. Lewis's missionary life is so largely the story of the Kimpese Institute, it is highly desirable that the reader should have good understanding of its character and its aims. I cannot better ensure this than by quoting at length from an article subsequently written for the *Missionary Herald* by Mr. Lewis. At the time of writing he and Mrs. Lewis had accepted the proposals of the

Committee, which had received the most cordial endorsement of the missionaries concerned. It may also be stated here that the Swedish Missionary Society, which had been party to the original scheme, stood aloof in the end, thus for the time being lessening the scope of the Institution.

“The very gratifying result which has attended our work on the Congo, and the rapid growth of the native Christian Church during the past few years, have brought the various missionary societies face to face with the problem of the better education of a native ministry. So urgent has this question become that for several years past it has occupied a prominent position in the joint Conferences of all the Protestant bodies labouring in that country.

“Fifteen months ago representatives of the American and British Baptist Missions met at Matadi to consider the possibility and advisability of establishing a United College for the training of native preachers, evangelists, and teachers, in connection with the Missions which work within the Congo-speaking area. There were some difficulties arising out of differences of dialects in use in the various Missions, but on talking over these matters we found that most, if not all, of these could be surmounted, and the feeling of the brethren was wholly and strongly in favour of a *joint* institution for the three principal societies working on the Lower Congo and in Portuguese Congo. Negotiations were entered into with the Swedish Missionary Society, who were also desirous of joining. This Society, as

well as the Americans, have training schools already in connection with their own work; but all consider that a well-equipped *United College* would be an immense advantage to the cause of Christ in Congoland. Not only can the training be better and more economically done, but a combined effort of all the Missions will have the supreme merit of uniting in Christian activity all the native Churches in connection with the different societies. It is confidently hoped that this bringing together of our future native teachers and leaders will be a source of true strength to the Churches in the land, and unite them all in aggressive evangelistic work.

“The negotiations are now sufficiently advanced to issue an appeal to the readers of the *Missionary Herald* for their help and sympathy in this great undertaking. All the friends of our Congo Mission will join us in thanking God that the time has now come for this advance, and already I am glad to find great interest is being exhibited by friends all over the country in this new college scheme.

“The location of the Institute will be at Kimpese, a point close to the Congo Railway, at a distance of about eighty miles from Matadi. Our American brethren in the early days secured a plot of ground of about thirty acres, with the intention of establishing a Mission Station at that place, but it was not occupied. This property is now to be transferred to the United College authority.

“The Constitution provides that ‘in accord with the commonly understood position of evangelical

Churches, and also in accord with the ordinance of immersion on a profession of faith, the instruction given in the Institution shall be based upon the acceptance of the Old and New Testament Scriptures as an authoritative standard of faith and practice. The importance of strict regard for Scriptural teaching in the observance of the ordinances of the Church shall be fully recognised.'

"The Institution is to be controlled by a Board of Trustees representing the three Missions.

"Three tutors have been appointed, one from each Society, to form the faculty of the College. This number is considered sufficient for the present, but as the work develops we shall require more assistance.

"It is estimated that we shall have in residence about 150 students, who will be brought in from various missions for a three years' course of training. Provision is also made for the training of young women who are, or will become, the wives of teachers, it being of the utmost importance to have trained women teachers for work among their Congo sisters.

"For the first few years the married teachers who are now in service at sub-stations will come in for special training. Arrangements will be made for them to live in native-built houses in the College grounds—husband and wife together. Later on, when the married people have received their course of training, we hope to open a special branch for young women who will be likely to become wives of teachers and evangelists.

"In this educational work we attach great

importance to the principle of a native ministry, and we shall avoid anything in the shape of an imitation 'white man.' Thus the life, housing, clothing, and feeding will be in accord with native ideas, only insisting on cleanliness, decency, and industry.

"The chief aim of the Institution will be to secure enlightened and intelligent teachers and evangelists, and to train them for evangelical work among their own people.

"The students will be required to do a certain amount of plantation and garden work to secure a supply of food for themselves. There will also be carpenters' and blacksmiths' shops, and a brick-making department, so that they will be able, in their sphere of labour, to build their own houses and schools and chapels without monetary help from the native Churches which employ them, and be in a position to elevate the people by teaching them these crafts.

"In addition to the cost of buildings, which it is hoped will be provided for out of the Arthington Fund, we shall require furniture, fittings, and accessories for the halls and classrooms, and also tools for our various industrial workshops.

"The support of students must be provided for, and it is estimated that £8 per year will keep a single student at the College, while £14 will support a student and his wife for the same period. I feel sure that many friends will count it a privilege to contribute such a sum yearly for the training of these young men and women for the native ministry of the gospel in Congoland.

"I may say that at the request of my brethren

in the field I have consented to become the B.M.S. tutor in this new college, and I have also just been appointed Principal. And as first Principal of this United Training Institute, I most earnestly and confidently appeal to all friends of the Congo Mission for their kind co-operation and liberal help."

On March 20th Mrs. Lewis wrote to Mrs. Pinnock of Kibokolo: "Before now you will have heard about the Training Institute and the probability that we shall not return to Kibokolo. I know you will be sorry, and so shall we; but the Committee are so anxious that we shall undertake this work, as also are the San Salvador folk, that we do not see our way to decline. In God's work we must do what is best for the work itself and not consider our own personal wishes, so if all goes well I suppose we shall go to Kimpese. It is a big undertaking at our time of life, but I know we shall have the prayers of you all for our guidance in all matters. I am sorry not to have the joy of gathering in when the harvest begins at Kibokolo, but none the less we shall take an interest in your work there and rejoice with you when that time comes. . . . To-night we go to chapel to attend our Sunday School Anniversary Tea Meeting. We had a lovely time on Sunday. Several hundred young folk occupied the galleries, all wearing daffodils and singing like larks. It was grand. I thought they would never finish. Dr. Clifford preached in the evening, and it was a rare treat to hear him."

"March 20th. (To Mrs. Hooper, of Kibokolo.)—
I have written all news to Mrs. Pinnock and have

asked her to let you read it, so please ask for it. I am very anxious to have news of your husband's health. No one mentions him, so I presume he is much better. 'It is not good for man to be alone,' you see, and I shouldn't be surprised if your company and care do wonders. I do trust you will both keep well, and have much blessing on your work.

"Please pet Sandy for me. I have a dear puss here, but don't forget old Sandy. I am afraid it will be a long time before I shall be able to have him again, if ever. I don't know how we shall be situated in this new station. I am sorry that we shall not work together again, and especially that I shall not have the joy of seeing some of those Zombo women and girls come to Christ. But I shall think of and pray for them, and I hope you may have the great joy of reaping a rich harvest from the seed sown through so many years of barrenness and discouragement.

"I hope you will write as often and as fully as you can, for I shall be very anxious to know how things go on. This work to which we are going is so important that we shall need all the help we can get, and trust we may have the prayers of all our brethren and sisters on the field, so that everything may be started on the right basis. I hear that Mr. Weeks has arrived safely, for which we are thankful. The spring flowers are out now: oh! they are so lovely. Though as yet there are not many English ones to be had: plenty of snowdrops in the country and crocuses in the gardens."

"May 7th. (To Mrs. Kirkland, of Mabaya.)—That opposition of the old chief is natural, but I

should think, from what Mr. Graham writes me with regard to the action of the San Salvador Resident, that it will turn out rather for the furtherance of the gospel. Opposition is far better than indifference. In the old days at San Salvador it was just at the time when the King so fiercely opposed his people coming to our services that the work began to develop and the nucleus of a Church was formed."

"June 5th. (To Mrs. Hooper, of Kibokolo).—I am sorry I did not write last mail, I was visiting friends and could not. This must be only a few lines as we are very busy. We leave London on Monday, 10th, and give up these lodgings until September or October. I have not seen your folks yet. I wrote the other day to say that we shall be going to Wales in September and hope to call on them if convenient.

"And now I want to tell you how greatly we rejoice with you in the baptism of Mayungululu. I am sure it will be a very great joy and encouragement to you both to feel that you have been the means of bringing the first Zombo convert to the Saviour's feet. May that joy be greatly multiplied to you all! You may be sure that in all your successes we shall rejoice with you, and shall ever pray that you may be guided and helped in all difficulties."

June brought holidays, and holiday spirits, and I would that space permitted me to quote at length Mrs. Lewis's letters and postcards. She is over fifty years old; she has done more than thirty years of strenuous work at home and abroad; yet she writes with the enthusiasm and

abandon of a girl of eighteen, just loosed from a convent school. The beauty of the Rhine scenery intoxicates her. With her husband's assistance she calculates how many Camden Road Chapels could be housed comfortably in the nave of Cologne Cathedral. She boasts of sleeping in a gorgeous chamber, one time occupied by the Queen of Holland, and chuckles over the deprivations of a young Anglican priest, who was evidently pining for splendid ritual, but having to officiate in a crude little church, must needs be content with "plain morning prayers and a sermon," which none the less she enjoyed exceedingly. From Stockholm she sends a message to "Prince," Mrs. Percival's dog, saying that she has seen some distant relatives of his, lovely little Esquimaux, and is sorry that she cannot send him photographs of them also.

This missive was dated June 25th. In July the postmarks are British once more, and on the 3rd she is in Peebles, N.B., enjoying gracious hospitality and the delights of long, luxurious drives among the hills. Ten days later her address is Maelgwyn, Pwllheli, where, amid familiar scenes, she is awaiting expectantly the mild discipline of an imminent "Chatauqua," meanwhile taking delight in many simple things, including the happy freedom of her neighbours—"the dear donkeys who roam at will across the common, and salute me from time to time with their melodious voices."

Late in August she is in Deal, staying with her friends the Parkinsons, and is one of a merry party, mostly young folk. Among other diversions they all get weighed and measured, and Mrs.

Lewis pokes fun at her husband's proportions and makes boast of her own. She weighed 8 st. 9 lbs. 10 oz. and measured 5 ft. 2½ in. She might well boast, for I recall a Congo entry in her diary, in which her recorded weight is less by a good 20 lbs.

Early in September she is staying with her cousin, Mrs. Welch, at the Vicarage, Millington, in Yorkshire; casually mentions that she cannot be impeded by more than the lightest baggage, and is on the point of departure for Swansea.

In the autumn she and her husband are occupied again by the labours and journeyings of deputation work. Yet all the while she maintains a voluminous correspondence with her sister colleagues upon the Congo, eagerly scanning their news and earnestly giving the counsel and information and sympathy which are often solicited or required.

The following letter was written on November 26th to Mrs. Moon, wife of the tutor appointed by the American Society to be the colleague of Mr. Lewis at Kimpese.

“66, HILLDROP CRESCENT, HOLLOWAY, LONDON, N.

“November 26, 1907.

“DEAR MRS. MOON,—I have not the pleasure of knowing you personally, that is yet to come, but your husband writes that you wish to hear from me with regard to the work that lies before us, *i.e.*, the training of the women students in the new college. As I believe you already know, I have always taken a great interest in the teaching and training of the Congo women and girls. I believe there are great possibilities in them, and that up till now they have hardly received the attention

they deserve. This being so I greatly rejoice in the prospect of doing something more for them, and am very glad to hear that you also are interested in this most important work.

“I suppose at first the women we have to train will be mostly wives and mothers, and that fact must necessarily influence the character and extent of their training. I do not see how we can expect those for instance who have babies to spend more than a small proportion of their time in the classroom. Then I think we shall have to arrange somehow for their children to be cared for while they are attending classes. Perhaps those without children might have extra teaching. I see no reason if it is thought desirable why the brighter ones should not attend some of the men’s classes or vice versa. Then, too, there is the question as to men with heathen wives, or wives who are not professing Christians. What do you think about them? Are they to be left in their towns, or to come in with their husbands? Or is it to be optional? Of course they could not attend all the classes; should they attend any?

“Then as to the subjects to be taught, I am writing somewhat in the dark, as I only know the teachers’ wives who belong to the San Salvador Church. But if I were arranging for them alone I should suggest the following:—

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Old Testament. | 4. Training of children. |
| 2. New Testament. | 5. The art of teaching. |
| 3. The Christian Life. | 6. Nursing of the sick. |

“That course, with their farm work as exercise, is I fancy as much as we could attempt. Later

on when we have a proper women's department with unmarried students, other subjects might be added. What do you think of this? I hope you will write and let me have your views freely, so that we may be able to arrange plans which shall commend themselves to us all. The wives of the San Salvador teachers are all Christians, able to read, write, and sew, and most, if not all, engaged in teaching. How far that is the case with others I do not know; perhaps you can tell me. Details as to our various duties must of course wait until we can meet and talk over matters. It seems to me that there will have to be a school conducted by one of us for the children of teachers, and for any boys and girls employed by us in our houses. This will provide a good opportunity for teaching how to teach.

"These are merely suggestions (which my husband agrees with), and I shall look forward to hearing from you with regard to them, or any others you can make.

"With kindest regards to you and Mr. Moon,

"Yours very sincerely,

"GWEN E. LEWIS."

The co-operation of Mrs. Moon in the work at Kimpese, to which Mrs. Lewis was looking forward, was not vouchsafed to her. In the order of Providence Mrs. Moon's arrival was delayed until Mrs. Lewis's work was almost done, and the shadow of death fast approaching.

In December Mrs. Lewis suffered from a serious attack of influenza, and during the spring of 1908 deputation work was sometimes interrupted, and

fears of delayed return to the Congo occasioned, by the illness of Mr. Lewis. Happily these fears were dispelled, and in May Mrs. Lewis writes of packing, and the hope of starting from Antwerp on June 11th, with Miss Spencer, who is going out to marry Dr. Gamble.

So the last, and in some respects the happiest, of her furloughs came to its end. It began with deep sorrow, but it yielded many joys. She was happy in her deputation work, happy in her holidays, happy in her intermittent life at home, and supremely happy in her relations with the Church. During these months I saw more of her than ever before, and was privileged to hold much converse with her and her husband, of that trustful order which yields true spiritual refreshment. I may be permitted to relate a single incident of our intercourse. During one of my visits to their home in Hilldrop Crescent Mr. and Mrs. Lewis spoke of Grenfell, and of the Committee's purpose to issue a biography. Drawn out by them, I freely expressed extemporaneous judgments as to the possibilities of the work and the manner in which it should be done. They listened with quiet interest, and in due course I went away, to return a few days later bringing with me, for their perusal, a letter from Mr. Wilson containing the Committee's request that I would write Grenfell's Life. Instead of sharing my amazement they broke into hearty laughter, confessed that they knew all about it, and that in our previous conversation they had been quizzing me. Their knowledge had come to them through attendance at Committee, and

they felt in honour bound not to anticipate the official communication. Needless to say, after that Grenfell's Life became a bread-and-butter topic between us, and I had the privilege of submitting certain early chapters for their criticism before they went away.

They had many missionary visitors, and among the most welcome and most frequently entertained were Mr. and Mrs. Lawson Forfeitt, whose disappointment at being forbidden to return to Congo, on the ground of Mr. Forfeitt's broken health, elicited their warmest sympathy. They attended as many as possible of the services at Camden Road Church, and often took part in its meetings; made many new friends among those who had joined the congregation in their absence; and were delightedly received in many homes. As ever, Mrs. Lewis won her way to the children's hearts. Two little girls of one family were specially drawn to her, and she asked them, when they said their prayers, to seek God's blessing upon her husband, herself, and their work. The little ones gave their promise, and kept it. When they were informed of her death, they were much grieved and perplexed, and at night the younger of them prayed on this wise: "Dear God, we are very sorry that you have taken Mrs. Lewis to heaven, for we wanted her here. And please do not let Mr. Lewis be too sad."

Her last farewell meeting at Camden Road will long be remembered by those who were present. A few friends in the company had loved her from girlhood, and many had loved her and her husband for long years. But during her last furlough the

heart of the whole Church had gone out to them in notable degree. I mentioned this in the meeting, and in so doing expressed the common consciousness of the audience. It is a tranquil joy to those of us who are left, to realise that in all her long association with it, the Church was never dearer to Mrs. Lewis, and that she was never dearer to the Church, than when it said its last "goodbye."

CHAPTER XVI

SETTLEMENT AT KIMPESE

A SECOND time Mr. and Mrs. Lewis sailed from Antwerp amid a storm of music and enthusiasm. The storm was not raised for them, yet none the less they enjoyed the thrill of it. The voyage was propitious, and in the quiet resting days their thoughts turned fondly backward to the friends they had left behind, as well as eagerly forward to the new work they were about to undertake. In her first letters Mrs. Lewis gives expression to that feeling of deepened affection for the Church, to which I have referred, little thinking that those who had become more than ever dear to her would see her face no more.

“SS. *Bruxellesville*, approaching Teneriffe, June 17, 1908. (To Miss Taylor.)—I shall very very often be thinking of you all, especially on Sundays. I shall try to keep in with your prayer circle; for somehow this time we are more than ever bound up in love and friendship with Camden. Give our love, too, to the dear friends at Harrow.

“We have had a splendid voyage so far, smooth and fine. There are three other missionaries on board—a young couple and a single lady, nice quiet

people, 'Brethren,' going to Westcotts' Mission on one of the tributaries of the Kasai—and we have a table together. Thousands of people gathered to see us off at Antwerp, as our captain is a Belgian—the first to attain that dignity. He seems a decent man.

"Matadi, July 8th.—We arrived at Banana ten days ago and found a letter waiting from Dr. Gamble, saying he was down with his first fever at Matadi. However, a week yesterday we came to Boma, and soon after eleven the next morning saw a little boat approaching in which was the Doctor. We were indeed glad for Miss Spencer's sake. That day we could do nothing but make arrangements, as it was a general holiday, flags flying, a regatta in the afternoon, and a torchlight procession in the evening, which was very pretty. On Thursday afternoon, July 2nd, we went ashore—just Dr. Gamble and the bride, with Tom and me. The British Consul accompanied us in a tram (steam) to the Governor's house, and the marriage took place in the Court of Justice, according to Belgian law, with the British Consul as witness. Then we walked down to the American Mission, where Tom conducted the religious service. Our other missionary friends were there from the ship, and the American missionary, his wife, and another lady. They had prepared a pretty tea, with flowers and a sugared cake. It was very kind. When we returned to the ship the captain, who was waiting to congratulate the bride and bridegroom, invited us to his cabin, and we must needs have tea and cake again. The next day we came here, where Mr. Phillips and Mr. Norman

gave us a most hearty welcome, and we had letters awaiting us from San Salvador, Kibokolo, and the Howells, bidding us welcome back to Congo. We have had a pleasant few days together. The Kasai friends left on Monday, and we saw the young couple off in the train at six this morning. By the same train went six nuns bound for San Salvador. I am sorry.

"The news from most of the stations is good, but Mrs. Graham is very unwell, and we have written urging her to take the doctor's advice and go home as soon as the Bowskills arrive. Mr. Graham is not well either, so I do hope they will go."

"Matadi, July 8th. (To Miss Ethel Percival.)—On Sunday the Commissaire (that is the magistrate in charge) and his wife from Boma, paid us a visit. They gave Kimpese a very good character. It is very pretty, with good water and plenty of fish, good food, &c. In that case we shall be better off than we expected. I shall be able to write more about this next mail. There is no lady on this station, so I have been making cakes and pies since I arrived, of which the gentlemen have been very glad."

"Kimpese, July 27th. (To Miss Beatrice Percival.)—This is such a queer place, just a kind of clearing in the bush, and we live in a one-roomed grass-house. On the opposite hill the Roman Catholics have an establishment, and we can see and hear the little train as it winds in and out and goes puffing up the hill. There is a fine range of hills on one side of us, and we shall look out upon them from our new home. Uncle is very busy getting

the ground and foundations ready, and I am endeavouring to teach three bush boys housework and cooking, as well as I can under the circumstances. I have also started to make a little garden with their help this morning, so that we can get some mustard and cress, lettuces, &c., before we get into our regular house, and Uncle makes the proper garden."

"August 19th.—We are both well I am thankful to say, but one never seems clean. It is the dry season, and the dust and 'jiggers' are dreadful. I am afraid this is a very bad place for insects. There are no end of flies now and a good many mosquitoes. What they will be in the rainy season I don't know! There is so much bush about. A good deal has already been cleared, but there is much yet to be done. It is so unfortunate that Tom has no one to help him responsibly. Of course we have a lot of men, but they need constant looking after. My boys are just beginning to be of use, and on Sunday two little girls arrived. They come from Makuta."

"September 10th. (To Miss Ethel Percival.)—Our garden is getting on. Yesterday Uncle and I put in peas and beans. The melons and cucumbers are coming up, and the flowers, some of them, will soon be in blossom. Uncle's carpenter has turned up ill, and has had to go away for several days, also one bricklayer. It is very trying, as it keeps everything back. Mr. Moon arrived on Monday, and to-day, Thursday, he has gone off to his old station to see about his things. His wife and two children are left in America. He has his meals with us, and seems a nice quiet man, and very



GRASS HOUSE AT KIMPE IN WHICH MR. AND MRS. LEWIS LIVED DURING CONSTRUCTION OF PERMANENT BUILDINGS (1908).

earnest. The weather is getting very much hotter. Several days lately it has been 86° or 87° in the shade."

"October 7th. (To Miss Ethel Percival.)—It was too bad to put you all off last mail with a p.c., wasn't it? But really I could not help it. I was so rushed, and in consequence, of course, head-achy. On the Sunday Uncle was very poorly, and I had to take service. He got better, and managed to finish a classroom he was putting up with iron walls and grass roof. It is divided by a partition, and we moved into it on Wednesday. We had just got in, thinking to get everything in readiness for the visit of the Trustees on Friday, when Mr. Moon came back from Matadi, as we expected, and with him Mr. Lowrie, from Mabaya, on his way home. We were very pleased to see him, but of course there had to be a fly round to get him bed, 'chop,' &c. Then just in the middle of the stir Daniel arrived from Zombo, bringing *Sandy*! He had to be petted and comforted after his long journey. Mr. L. went off early the next day, and just as I was making some cakes in readiness for the day following, in walked Mr. Frame! Another fly round! Then on Friday there was, of course, a big dinner to prepare for night. They all arrived by midday train, *i.e.*, about half-past two, Mr. and Mrs. Bain, Mr. Phillips, and Dr. Sims. . . . As my cook is so new, I had to look after everything myself, so that I could not enjoy their company as I should have liked to do. Mrs. Bain is a Swede, and very pleasant. Dr. Sims is most kind. I don't know what we should do without him. . . . I can also consult him about the

medical work which I have begun here. I was forced to it. We have so many workmen with us, and lots of other people come as well. I have only begun regularly to-day. My garden is doing so well, and looks so pretty; I wish you could see it. . . . You would love the pretty little chicks we have now, such a lot of them. Four broods are out, and two other hens and the duck sitting. Yesterday men arrived from Kibokolo with sixty fowls; so you see we have plenty of fresh 'chop, and do not need to fall back on tins, as we did at first. All food is much dearer than at Kibokolo or San Salvador. Uncle is awfully busy, and Mr. Moon, with the two houses. The roof of the office is just being put up. By the way, a day or two after I wrote to Mother, one of our men brought us a fine big fish from the river, which we enjoyed very much; but we have not seen any since."

"November 18th. (To Miss Ethel Percival.)—It is just pouring with rain now, and after the frightful heat of the day the rain is quite a relief. Our house is going up fast. The office outbuilding is nearly finished, and to-day our two roll-top desks were unpacked so as to keep them from the white ants. The rest of the house has only a skeleton yet. It will be delightful when finished. I only wish our friends could see us in it. . . . The garden is not flourishing quite as well as it did; there is too much rain for it, and the insects are awful."

"November 30th. (To Miss Beatrice Percival.)—Uncle is looking for a snake, a Boa, who came and paid us a visit last evening just as we were going

to tea. Two hens were sitting on one nest. One was killed, the other they saved and transported to a place of safety, with her eggs, but in the night the silly thing went back to the place of peril and was killed by the snake. It was dark yesterday, and while the boys were getting a light the snake made off, and they cannot find it. But we know it is about, and are afraid it will kill more fowls, or the ducks. Did I tell you the duck had a family of fourteen? but there are only ten now. It is wonderful they have survived; but she is a splendid mother, and we should be sorry if anything happened to her, poor thing. The snakes are plentiful about here. Uncle has just returned, but can't find the enemy. December 1st.—I am just waiting breakfast, 7.25 a.m. This is our twenty-second wedding day; just fancy! We have indeed much to be thankful for. Here we are quite well and very busy—both desirable things. I believe the ducks and fowls are all right this morning, so I suppose the Boa has gone elsewhere. The monkeys came the other night and eat up the maize which the girls had planted. They say there are crowds of them, but I have not seen them yet. I have told the boys and girls to let me know next time they appear.”

“December 2nd. (To Miss Taylor.)—“We are still in the classroom, into which we moved from our grass-house. Our permanent house is getting on, but the workmen are very slow and very stupid, and Tom cannot do as much here as in Kibokolo, the atmosphere is so different. I am thankful to say that for many weeks now we have all been quite well. It will be nice when

we get into our new home and really begin the work of the Institute. But there is much to be done first, of all sorts.

“We thought of you all very much last week at the Sale time. I trust it was a great success. I am glad Mr. Parkinson was there. . . . I wonder where you are going to spend your Christmas. We expect to go down to Matadi on the Saturday before Christmas Day, remaining until the Wednesday. Mr. Phillips is marrying a very nice Swedish lady, a widow, and wishes Tom to tie the knot. We shall be alone probably on Christmas Day, as our American colleague, Mr. Moon, is going for a few days to his friends at Mbanza Manteka, as soon as we return.”

“December 2nd.—Thank you so much for the papers. There seem to be stirring times just now—what with the unemployed and the suffragists. The Government strikes me as a bit disappointing. ‘Put not your trust in princes’—nor in statesmen! That was a charming letter to Dr. Clifford from the Archbishop; I am very glad he wrote it. I hear they are starting Study Classes at Camden; I am very glad of that too.”

“December 16th.—It is pouring with rain and is very dark, as I have had to close the windows, or rather the shutters, and I have only half of the door open to let in some light. Tom is over at the new house getting work done inside, as they cannot go on with the roof. But part of it is up and the office, so he can be there to keep the men at work, which they think very hard. These people always go to sleep directly there is rain, and don’t think they ought to work. Seeing that

it rains mostly half of every day now they would have a pretty easy time of it. Since I wrote last, we have both been ill again. We were in bed together for two or three days with fever; Tom with his usual gastritis, and I with a very bad head. It hindered things for a week. The boys and girls were very good. My cook did everything very nicely, and made us soup and arrow-root, and the biggest girl waited on us, so we got through. I was well enough just to say what we wanted and tell them how to do it. Mr. Moon kept things going on the station, and looked in and out. . . . We are expecting to go down tomorrow to Matadi to Mr. Phillips's wedding. I hope we shall get there all right. The river is in flood they say, piers covered and trains running in water. It is an exceptionally wet season."

"December 16th. (To Miss Beatrice Percival).— You would have enjoyed the sight I had recently. At the back of our house at the bottom of a steep slope runs a stream, thickly wooded, and the other day the girls called me to see the monkeys. I had planted a little sweet maize as an experiment, and the girls saw a monkey come right up to within a few yards. When I went I had a fine view of big and little monkeys, regular 'Banderlays,' running up and down, in and out, among the great tree-branches. Uncle says they will have to be killed. But I can't bear the idea. They do seem like distant relatives, don't you think? Dear old Sandy is as sweet as ever. Mr. Moon is going to see to his feeding. He likes Sandy, as indeed does every one. I wonder how the servant is going on; I hope she won't scoot

after Christmas. It is such a comfort having a decent girl who can really do things. That book you sent Uncle by an American, Mr. Bradford, I like very much. But it does not go far enough. He is hardly evangelical, I should say. I like that of Rendel Harris immensely. I am reading now Mr. Grenfell's Memoir, by Sir H. Johnston. It is very interesting, but hardly gives a portrait of the man. I expect Mr. Hawker's will do that. This is more a series of pictures of the country, and the people and missions in general, to which the author is most sympathetic. You would like to read it, I think. Mr. Parkinson sent it to us."

"Matadi, December 24th.—Your letters were so sad this time that I hardly know how to write to you, as I do not know in what circumstances this letter may find you, but I must write to wish you from us both very many happy returns of your birthday; and if this birthday is clouded by anxiety and trouble [occasioned by Mr. Hartland's grave illness], may the new year upon which you are entering be bright with the sunshine of the Master's presence, and even darkest days and nights be lightened by His countenance and His help. How I wish I could be with you! I am afraid your Christmas is a sad and anxious time. We have had a very queer Christmas, or rather shall have had when it is over. We came down here on Thursday last, this day week. On Sunday morning we proceeded to Boma by the French steamer. I was in bed with fever all the time there. Mr. Phillips was married by the Consul on Monday, and on Tuesday we came up in the gunboat. I was much better, and was able

to attend the wedding here in the afternoon, and to help in getting the boys' feast yesterday. To-day we have been talking and arranging all sorts of things and packing. To-morrow (25th) we expect to go up to Kimpese. I am pretty well, though not very strong yet."

"January 4, 1909. (To Miss Ethel Percival.)— I have just read your letters over, but I am rather in a 'wigwam' as to who sent which books. We have dipped into them all, I think, and Uncle is much taken with 'Lloyd George.' But who sent me 'The House of the Wolf'? Was it one of you? We got part of our mail here and part at Matadi: then with the wedding and my fever I have got regularly mixed. I was interested about your visit to Mrs. Taylor and should have loved all the dear animals. But I don't believe you like them better than the babies! Of course some of those are not so interesting. As for Sandy, I think you might write that book. A good idea! I have no time or brains for it. My time seems taken up in all sorts of mundane ways—cooking, cutting out and machining clothes for my ten 'children,' looking after and growing (and eating) vegetables, nursing, and so on. Then in a few weeks' time I shall have three or four hours' teaching daily. I don't know how all is to be squeezed in. Now I must leave off and go to the garden with one of my girls. I want to transplant some lettuces and sow some others. We have had lovely cabbages every day for some time; to-day we had beans again and tomatoes galore. Yes, I agree with you that I do not like the fowls having to be killed. Still, I

think it much better for them than getting ill, and the hens and chicks are most interesting, to say nothing of the eggs, which are a great blessing. The ducks, too, are doing splendidly; the nine ducklings are growing fast. The old drake eats out of my hands, and the duck is most friendly, I shan't make friends with those which have to be killed.

"I wish you could see my convolvuli, they are so lovely, and the French and African marigolds do splendidly. Uncle, too, has a lot of flowers coming on. I only wish his health was better."

"January 28th. (To Miss Taylor.)—I know you will be sorry to hear that I have had two fevers since the one at Boma, and that Tom is only just recovering from a nasty fever and gastric attack; so you can imagine things do not go on very fast. The students (some of them) arrived last week and are busy building their houses; fortunately Mr. Moon is well. He is a very hard-working, earnest man. The wives and children are not to come until March. I do hope we shall be having better health by that time. We expect to be in our house in a few weeks now. We should have been there long ago but for these illnesses. We had Mr. Thomas with us for a week from Wathen. He came to sit for his exam. in the language, and has come off splendidly. We like him very much. He seems the right sort of man. . . . The day after we returned from Matadi we made a sort of Christmas for the children, and when they were all here inspecting their presents, with a lot of the workmen and other people looking on, I brought out *Bella*.¹ You should have seen them. The girl

¹ See Appendix, Note F.

who was with Mrs. Pinnock rushed at her as an old friend, and the others were lost in astonishment. They are all delighted to have her, though two of them are rather old for dolls."

"February 24th. (To Miss Ethel Percival.)—We are in our new house, or at least part of it, two rooms and the office, and are enjoying the boarded floors and the advantage of being able to get to the kitchen without going out of doors. Of course there is one drawback. The house not being finished the workmen are busy and the noise is awful. Fortunately I do not suffer with my head as I used to do, but it rubs up my spine and is not conducive to comfort. Still, things are getting on, so we are very glad. The house will be lovely when finished. I have not attempted to beautify yet. That is to come. The men are here getting their houses ready. Next week the women and children come, and on the 8th we begin the real work of the College. Then I shall be very busy, as besides what I have to do at present I shall have about three hours' teaching every day except Saturday. I shall be able to tell you more about that later on.

"Concerning the monkeys! they have mostly gone to another part of our grounds, and have not troubled us lately. The snakes come after the fowls and eggs, and that is a real trouble. We are not afraid of them. It is a strange fact (which Sir H. Johnston mentions in his book, I see) that one rarely hears of accidents from snake-bites either to the natives or white people. I don't know how it is except that one does not go out much at night when the snakes are most abroad."

CHAPTER XVII

THE FIRST SESSION AND THE LAST VOYAGE 1909

THE United Training Institute, the evolution of which has been rather indicated than described in the previous chapter, was formally opened on March 15th. It is almost certain that Mrs. Lewis wrote to some of her friends an account of this interesting function, which marked at once the attainment of a goal and the starting of a new race; or perhaps it would be more fitting to say, the beginning of the last lap of a long race, run throughout in the spirit of St. Paul. But such account has not come to my hand, so I fall back upon that written by her husband, and printed in the *Missionary Herald*.

“When we arrived here in July last we had only one small grass-house for our shelter. The ground had to be cleared and laid out, dwelling-houses and stores as well as lecture-halls had to be erected, and before the work of teaching could be commenced nineteen two-roomed grass-houses had to be built for the accommodation of the students. This was a great work, and we are grateful to God for the strength given us to enable us to open



KIMPESE : KONGO TRAINING INSTITUTION—PART OF STUDENTS' QUARTERS.

the College for actual teaching within nine months of our arrival on the ground.

“ March 15th was a memorable day with us, for it was the opening day of the first United Training College on the Congo. We had no great personage or any strangers to share in our festivities. My American colleague, the Rev. S. E. Moon, and Mrs. Lewis and myself had the students all to ourselves. The proceedings were very simple, and consisted only in an inaugural address from the Principal, in which he reviewed the work of the two Baptist societies on the Congo and the development of the native Churches and native workers. The importance of the College work was insisted upon for all the teachers and their wives, that they might be better equipped for the Master's service in Congo-land. Matters of conduct and discipline in the school were put before them and explained. Answering a question from one of the men, I told them that we were not going to make any rules or regulations, as we expected them in all things to conduct themselves as men of God, always mindful of the honour of the school. We started by trusting them, and we hoped there never would be any necessity to formulate rules and regulations for their personal conduct. At the same time we shall at the commencement of each session make it clear to all the students what is expected of them.

“ We have now had seven weeks of uninterrupted study, and are most pleased with our first set of men and women. We have this session nineteen men and fourteen women, making the total number of students thirty-three. We consider this an excellent beginning, and next October

we shall receive several fresh ones. There are a number of applicants, but at present we cannot say how many we can receive.

"I undertook the work of this United College with considerable reluctance and only under pressure from my brethren of the two Missions. It has meant a great deal of hardship to Mrs. Lewis and myself. At our age rough work and poor accommodation in a country like this are very trying, but we have been wonderfully preserved through it all. For some months we were not in good health, but since getting into our new permanent house we have been much better. The anxiety about the successful issue of the College work was also great, and it is no small satisfaction to know that not only has the class work been started, but that everything has gone on smoothly with the students. Indeed, we have succeeded far better than I anticipated and are all very happy in the work.

"Much is due to the manner in which brethren from other stations have supported us, and I wish to record my deep appreciation of the confidence they have given me in this undertaking and of their brotherly love and sympathy. Moreover, the trustees of the Institution have taken the deepest interest in all the work, and we greatly appreciate the complete confidence they have shown the staff."

Two days after the opening Mrs. Lewis wrote to her niece stating that she was very well, notwithstanding the fact that the temperature nearly every afternoon exceeded 100°, sometimes

reaching 103°, and this great heat a damp heat withal. Mr. Lewis has had another illness, not severe, and they are looking forward eagerly for the dry season, when life at Kimpese will be reasonably pleasant. In reply to congratulations upon the coming of many visitors she has to admit with regret that the joy of hospitality is sometimes a little burdensome, owing to imperfect domestic conditions and the press of constant work.

“April 6th.—I was glad to find from your letters that father [Mr. Hartland] was no worse and able to keep warm. . . . We have been sweltering here with the heat. I have been sitting in school with perspiration literally streaming from my face. We have been very busy, not only with our classes, which begin at 6.30 a.m. and go on all day, but in getting into our sitting-room and store. Hitherto we have only occupied dining-room and bedrooms. The sitting-room is painted with the pretty green enamel which Mr. Keep gave us, and when we get our pictures up and our curtains hung it will look very well. We have mosquito-netting for windows and door, so that we may sit there in the evening without being bitten all over.”

A tea-service, knocked about for months, has been unpacked with only one small plate broken. The use of it is a great luxury after the crude make-shifts of the building-time; and significant of the bigness of the Congo field is the following sentence, “We have met the William Forfeitts *at last*, after working twenty years *together* on the Congo. They were on their way down in

the train, and as a truck got derailed they were detained, and we had nearly two hours of their company."

"May 12th. (A circular letter.)—I am sending you a few lines with some photos to give you a little account of our work here.

"In one sense it is quite different to any we have been engaged in before, for except on Sundays all our teaching is for Christians and Christian workers. They are men and women who have a little knowledge—in most cases *very little*—but who wish to learn more that they may be fitted to help and teach their fellow-country-people. These students come from different parts of the Lower Congo, and have been sent here by the missionaries of the two Societies, our own and that of the American Baptists. They speak in various dialects, but are all able to understand us and one another, as the language is really one.

"In January the men came (nineteen of them), and soon a number of little two-roomed grass-houses could be seen springing up in the portion of ground set apart for them. They are arranged in three roads, and look quite a little town. When the houses were finished the men went back to their towns and in a fortnight returned with their wives and children. We have fourteen women here at present. Two or three of the men have not their wives with them this term, but hope to have them next, and one is a bachelor. Then there are about twenty-four children, some little ones, belonging to students; others the little nurses who take care of the babies while the

mothers are in their classes. These children and our boys in the house have school each afternoon.

“The days are all very busy, and go too quickly. The school bell rings at half-past six in the morning, when Mr. Lewis has the men to begin the day. After breakfast the men’s classes, taught by Mr. Lewis and Mr. Moon, proceed till noon, in which they study many subjects, such as Old and New Testament, Geography, Astronomy, Arithmetic, and Homiletics; also French and Portuguese languages.

“The men we have here seem very nice and intelligent, and all have been engaged in teaching at the various stations of the two Missions. The women, two or three of whom are old friends of mine, cannot give so much time to school as their husbands, as they have their children to look after; but we have three hours every day, one and a half hours in the morning, and the same again in the afternoon. This kind of teaching is quite new to them, but they seem really to enjoy it, and it is quite interesting to see how their minds begin to open to ideas that have never entered them before. Many could not even read when they came, and never tried to sew or write. But sewing they take to easily, and they are getting on very quickly with their reading. The writing they find more difficult, but that will come in time. Some can read and write well, and can cut out and sew both with hand and machine, but these are the women who as girls were on one of the Mission stations. We have these subjects in the afternoon, when my four girls join us. Also in Geography and Arithmetic they are most in-

terested. On Fridays while they sew I read to them from 'The Holy War,' which has been translated by Mr. Phillips.

"In the morning we have two classes each day. Three mornings weekly we give to the study of the Old and New Testament ; on one I am telling them *how* we got the Bible ; and on Fridays we have prayer, and a talk about Christian living. Beside that they are learning a little about Natural History : our bodies, health, &c., and also how different things are made. By all these means we are trying to teach them to see God's finger in all His wonderful works, and to enlarge their thoughts. We finish the week's work as far as teaching is concerned by a singing class, which I hold on Friday evening. All the men and as many of the women as can crowd into our dining-room, sing hymns for an hour. That is a hot hour, and you might see the perspiration pouring off my face as I play the American organ.

"On Sundays we all meet together—teachers, students, workmen, and children—for our morning service, which is conducted alternately by Mr. Lewis and Mr. Moon. In the afternoon the students have a service, which any one who likes can attend, and at the same time I have a class of all the girls on the Station. There are only eight of them, but with pictures and hymns and Bible stories we have a good time. After teaching the women all the week I am glad to have the children on Sundays.

"I have not mentioned the industrial classes which the men attend in the afternoons, or the gardens in which both men and women work.

Each couple has a piece of land, which they cultivate for food, and it is a pleasant sight to see husband and wife working together in these plantations.

“To us who can remember the conditions which obtained here when we came to Congo twenty-two years ago, it is indeed a source of encouragement and thankfulness to look at the faces of these young men and women, and to see that they are the fruit of the toil of the last thirty years. Many of the labourers have passed away to their rest, but their works do follow them. Just now we are at the beginning, and the Institute will grow both in the number of students and in their attainments. We are now anxious to lay good and firm foundations upon which others may build in the days to come.”

“May 21st.—There has been great excitement here to-day, we have been terribly busy and are very tired this evening. The Belgian Colonial Minister has come out to Congo, and is going to look at things in general. Yesterday he sent up a message saying that he was coming here to see us, so we had to fly round. We had already heard that he purposed staying at the Catholic Mission, and Tom had sent a note to say he would like to have a share in welcoming him. The head priest, who speaks English, wrote a very pleasant reply. So we had our road from the station cleaned, the Catholics had theirs cleaned, and each Mission erected a triumphal arch. Last night Tom and I were up quite late finishing a motto: ‘Congo Training College welcomes Colonial Minister.’ Of course to-day everything had to be swept and

garnished, and after dinner Tom and Mr. Moon went down to the station followed by all the students, workmen, and children, bearing a banner with 'Vive le Ministre!' inscribed. I did not see all this as I had to stay at home to receive the great man. The priests were there also with their contingent. We lent them our rickshaws to convey the Minister (Mons. Renkin) and his wife. They went straight to the Catholic Mission, and then came on here; not the lady, for which I was sorry, but the Minister and his Secretary, the Secretary-General of the Congo State, the attendant Doctor, and a priest. They came and had a cup of tea first. Of course I got out all my pretty things for them; then they went and saw everything. They were especially pleased and evidently impressed by the students' quarters, and I hope this and other things M. Renkin may see will give him a good idea of Protestant missions. He seemed quite inclined to be friendly with the natives, and we hear that his sympathies are with reform, so we trust good may come of his visit. Prince Albert has gone through Katanga, and M. Renkin is going to meet him and bring him down the Congo home. He had seen Mr. Phillips and Dr. Sims at Matadi. To-morrow he will have a send-off from the station."

"May 25th. (To Mrs. Gamble, San Salvador.)—You asked about the lemon grass at San Salvador. We brought it from Matadi, and I suppose it came originally from Jamaica, but we do not know; neither do we know its proper name. I learned from an article by Winston Churchill in the *Strand* that it is extensively planted in

Uganda and keeps off mosquitoes. We have some growing here, and if only it would render this service it would indeed be a blessing. But I doubt if anything will rid us of mosquitoes unless we could alter the whole place. We are longing for the complete cessation of the rains that we may have a few months' respite from these plagues."

"June 10th. (To Miss Ethel Percival).—Since Monday—this is Thursday—I have been in bed with a nasty liver attack, severe headache, and a little temperature. I am better to-day, and we hope to go out this evening for a ride in our rickshaws. It will do Uncle good, too, to have a blow. My being in bed is very worrying for him with all his other work, and he has not been at all fit. Happily he is better to-day, and we hope that now the dry season has really set in we shall keep well. We have been much better lately, but the mosquitoes here are really dreadful."

The next day, June 11th, Mrs. Lewis wrote to me, sending her own and her husband's congratulations upon the completion and publication of "The Life of George Grenfell." The *British Weekly* was the most prized by her of all the papers which came from England, and its Editor was one of her oracles. She had received the issue containing Claudius Clear's appreciative review, and told of her joy and pride in reading it, regretting that expanse of land and sea prevented her from dropping in to say what she felt with her own lips. She also wrote in affectionate terms of her gladness in the recovery of my little daughter

Phyllis, who had lain for weeks in the valley of the shadow of death. It was my last letter, and abides a cherished possession.

“June 17th.—Next week we expect Mrs. Moon out. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Bowskill from San Salvador are coming to spend a week, and all the Trustees are coming for two nights. This will make a party of ten or eleven to provide for. In the middle of July the Institute breaks up for two months’ vacation, during which many things will have to be done which hitherto have been left undone.”

This meeting of the Trustees was much upon Mrs. Lewis’s mind from the date of the Colonial Minister’s visit. The instinct of the hostess was strong in her, and she must needs do all within her power for the comfort and good entertainment of so large a company of friends. When one remembers the exacting and incessant calls of every day, following the hardships and long strain of previous months, it is a matter of regret that this additional stress could not be avoided. Every week-end she was completely spent, but resting as much as possible on Saturday and Sunday she commenced again on Monday, kept the pace and would not be restrained.

On June 30th, she wrote the following report of her work to be read at the Trustees’ meeting held the next day:—

“This session has been very encouraging, and gives good promise for the future; the women have attended the classes regularly, and shown much interest in their work.

“Of the fourteen women who came into the

Institute, only five could read, write, or sew. The others, with two exceptions, have made good progress in these subjects, and from among these, two have done so well that they should be reading in their New Testaments in a few weeks' time.

"It is of the utmost importance that teachers' wives should be able to read, and I would like to suggest that in stations where the men are receiving preparatory training some arrangement should be made whereby their wives should at least be taught to read.

"Four of the women are so far beyond the others that they ought to have been taught separately, but that has been impossible, owing to my being single-handed. I feel, however, that they are all benefiting more or less, and some seven or eight bid fair to make useful teachers when their term of training is over.

"One hour and a half in the afternoons has been occupied with ordinary school subjects—reading, writing, arithmetic, elements of geography, including the compass and maps of Palestine and Congo, and sewing, during which I am reading aloud from 'The Holy War.'

"In the mornings we have had two classes a day, in which we have studied the following subjects: Old Testament: first fifteen chapters Genesis. New Testament: first three chapters Luke, and life of John the Baptist. History of the Bible—till time of Wycliffe. Natural history of trees and flowers. Simple hygiene and physiology: cleanliness, prevention of disease, structure of the eye. Object-lesson: paper, cloth, slates, glass. These last three subjects, which were

almost entirely new to them, have excited much interest, and I trust have been and will still more in the future be the means of opening their eyes and minds to the wonders of God's universe.

"On Friday mornings I have given them a series of talks on the Christian life, taking as my subjects love, truth, purity, thankfulness, joy, peace, temperance, prayer. After which a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes have been spent in prayer, led by the women themselves; and it has been good to listen as they voiced their thankfulness to God for giving them this opportunity of learning more of His works and will, and asked for more grace and wisdom in the various relationships of life.

"In conclusion, I can only express my joy in the work, which has been a great pleasure to me personally, and my gratitude to God for health and strength, so that I have only missed one week's teaching during the term.

"GWEN E. LEWIS.

"*June 30, 1909.*"

The much anticipated meeting was duly held, and all passed off well. The cares of entertainment were rather lightened than increased for Mrs. Lewis by the presence of one of her visitors, Mrs. Bowskill from San Salvador, for whom she had conceived a warm affection. More than once she had written expressing earnest desire that her friend might be able to come, and though grief-stricken by recent news of the death of her father, Mrs. Bowskill came, finding solace in sympathy and relief in service.



KIMPESE : KONGO TRAINING INSTITUTION. THE REV. THOMAS LEWIS (PRINCIPAL), MRS. LEWIS, THE REV. S. E. MOON
(A.B.M.U. TUTOR), AND STUDENTS, 1909.

All passed off well, but the long tension proved to be too severe. The dauntless spirit was finally overborne by the now frail and exhausted body. A week after the meeting of the Trustees Mrs. Lewis collapsed, and in the four following letters, which contain all matters of moment, she brings her life-story to the verge of conclusion.

When the fever struck her down she had just finished reading "The Life of George Grenfell," and when hæmaturic symptoms appeared she quietly remarked to her husband: "Hæmaturia killed Grenfell and it is going to kill me."

"KIMPESE,

"*July 22, 1909.*

"MY DEAREST LILY AND ALICE,—I know you won't mind another joint letter when you hear the reason. Thank you so much for your kind letters telling us all the sad details of dear father's last days and funeral. You know how we loved him, and I cannot think of that armchair without him and the outstretched hands and kind smile with which he always greeted us. It is well with him! May you two dear ones be kept and comforted!

"Well, two weeks ago to-night I went to bed with fever, and yesterday I got into the sitting-room for the first time. I am reclining on the couch writing this, so you must not mind pencil. On the Sunday hæmaturia appeared, and all Sunday and Monday I was very seriously ill. On Sunday morning, as soon as was possible, Dr. Sims arrived, but I had just taken a turn for the better. He said the treatment was quite satisfactory, but gave me some fresh medicine and watched me care-

fully. The next morning he pronounced me out of danger, so was able to return to Matadi, leaving all directions with Tom. Since then I have been gradually but surely getting better. The kindness of every one has been beyond words, and indeed I cannot but feel that my life has been spared in answer to prayer, though, under God, I owe it to the careful and skilful nursing of my dear husband. He has been my only nurse night and day and has had strength sufficient. The Moons, Mr. Phillips, and Dr. Sims have done all they could in every way. Mr. P. sent up by the mail to San Salvador. Yesterday two men arrived post haste with letters so full of kindness and love that they nearly upset me. When the natives heard of my illness they arranged to send, and pay, a messenger with a loving letter of sympathy—had done it, indeed, before the missionaries were aware. Dr. Gamble wrote to say he was ready to come at once if Dr. Sims could not stay, and Mrs. Bowskill wanted to come and nurse me. Mr. B. said she was ‘pining to be with me.’ Mr. P. sent to them a special messenger with the Doctor’s report that I was better, and part of the morning service was given up to prayer for us. I think it was lovely of them, now that we have been away for so long, and very encouraging; so I tell it you. I cannot write all these details over again, so read to Mrs. P. what I have written. I am so glad you were having a change, and trust you are getting over the strain a bit now. I am being fed up, only I don’t want to eat. This afternoon I had a ride round the piazza.

“Ever yours lovingly,

“GWEN.”

" KIMPESE,

" *August 13, 1909.*

" MY DEAREST FANNY.—Many thanks for your long newsy letter. I am sorry I cannot send you one ditto. Possibly you may have heard of my serious illness—hæmaturic fever. It is five weeks since I went down, and here I am still in bed with temperature 100°·5. Tom had one of his gastric and fever attacks in the middle of it, so we had to nurse each other. Now he is up and about again. And if all goes well we hope to travel to England some time next month with Dr. and Mrs. Gamble. Of course we can only make provisional plans, and leave our future in God's hands. But it seems the only thing to do. Please tell Mr. Hawker and any other friends. You will, I know, pray for us that we may reach England in safety. Love to all dear friends, especially your dear self.

" Yours lovingly,

" GWEN."

" KIMPESE,

" *August 16, 1909.*

" MY DEAREST BEE,—Your letters came on Saturday just as ours had gone. We hope to send this by French mail, and you will get it in the middle of September. I am afraid I have treated you badly without meaning to do so. Never mind, dear old Bee, we will make it up when we meet. On Saturday came very kind letters from San Salvador, and one from Dr. Gamble, in which he said the only thing to be done for us folks was that he and his wife should

come to look after us, so they were packing up to go by the next mail, and would be with us next week to help us to pack, and then take us home with them. I suppose, therefore, it is pretty certain that we shall start by boat on September 5th, and arrive about the end of the month. There is no knowing where we land. We shall wire when we get somewhere. I am in bed now, but yesterday made some headway and was lifted on to a couch and hope to be again to-day. My temperature was normal, or below, this morning, but it rises a little daily. It is a relief to know the Gambles are coming. I am especially glad for Uncle's sake, for although about he is not fit to do everything. Don't try to get rooms: I like to see to that myself. We shall probably be at 66 again.

"Your ever loving Aunt,

"GWEN."

PS.—Heaps of love to you all. I hope you will have a nice holiday.

"KIMPESE,

"August 26, 1909.

"MY DEAR MRS. HOWELL,—I have wanted to write to thank you so much for your kind letters and for the lovely eggs, which I have greatly enjoyed. Your letter to-day is very kind, for I am sure you will have a busy time preparing for the Conference. I am thankful to say I am very much better. I have walked into the bedroom for the first time with my husband's assistance. I daresay you have heard that both Dr.

Sims and Dr. Gamble have ordered us home. Dr. and Mrs. G. have been here now a week, helping to nurse and pack, and we hope to go down next Tuesday to Matadi and home with them. They have hastened their homagoing by one mail so as to take us with them, and have been most kind, as indeed has every one. Mr. Thomas from Wathen was here for a week giving a hand all round. As probably you heard, Mr. Lewis was down for nine or ten days with fever and gastric attack, so we were both in bed together. Our children have been most good, indeed I don't know what we should have done without them, especially two. Mr. Frame has kindly consented to take Mr. Lewis's place while we are away. He has just been here for two nights arranging things, and left us this morning. You can understand how loath we were to go, but it seems the only thing to do, as we are neither of us fit to face another session's work. Mrs. Moon will do her best for the women, but she is not free with the language. Still they will be able to join some of the men's classes.

"I am writing this on the couch, so please excuse pencil. This must be to say goodbye. May you all be kept in health. We are so sorry to hear of the bad colds. God bless and keep you in all your goings and comings. Kindest regards to your husband and Mr. and Mrs. Stonelake, and love to yourself, from

"Yours affectionately,
"GWEN E. LEWIS."

This was the last letter Mrs. Lewis ever wrote.

The rest may be told in a few words. The railway journey was accomplished with comparative comfort. The authorities reserved a compartment for her and she travelled in bed. On September 5th the party sailed from Matadi. The unremitting and skilled attention of Dr. and Mrs. Gamble was of greatest comfort to the patient and her husband, and during five days there was hopeful improvement, and happy intercourse was enjoyed. Then hæmaturia suddenly returned and hope was relinquished. She said quietly to her husband: "Tom, we know as much about this as the doctors; I think I am dying, don't you?" And he had to reply, "Yes, my darling, I do." Then she concerned herself with messages to her friends, some of whom she saw with the clearness of vision, and much was said of Camden Road Church, and even of its Sale of Work, which she had hoped to attend. She was especially concerned for her sister and her nieces, saying simply, "They will be grieved"; and begged that Mr. Myers, who, five-and-twenty years before, had brought her news of John Hartland's death, might bear the heavy tidings to them. The words "They will be grieved," became a kind of refrain which she repeated after naming her friends. She could not bear gloom, and smilingly rebuked her doctors for looking grave, saying, "One would think it was a terrible thing to die." The Mission was more to her than life, and she said to her husband, "It is well that I am going. The doctors would never allow me to return, and that would block your work; now you will be free to go on

with it." She lingered for days, calm and bright, often murmurously singing hymns, the tunes only when the words no longer came at call; and on September 17th passed away, holding tightly the hand of the man to whom she had been gentle wife, and gallant comrade, and perennial inspiration, for three-and-twenty years.

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise or blame; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

Every one on board had exhibited the kindest concern during her illness. The captain and the stewards could not do enough for her; and the sorrow occasioned by her death was shared by all. Her funeral was reverently ordered. The officers attended in full uniform, and all the stewards and passengers were present. M. Renkin, the Belgian Colonial Minister, who had so recently been her guest, for whom she had set out all her pretty things, and from whom she hoped good service for Congo, walked in the procession to the main deck, immediately behind the chief mourner. The captain read the burial service, and as the day was dying her body was committed to the deep, off Cape Blanco.

* * * * *

When Mr. Lewis arrived in this country he received nearly a hundred letters expressing sympathy with him in his great bereavement and appreciation of his wife. The following typical quotations are taken from letters written by four

friends of Mrs. Lewis whose names are mentioned in this book.

From Mrs. Edward Robinson, Bristol: "My thoughts go back to the time when she stayed with us before she was married, and I always retained such a loving regard for her, and thought her one of the finest women I knew. The loss to the Mission will be almost irreparable."

From the Rev. William Brock, London: "I knew your dear wife when she was still Miss Thomas, and used to come over to Heath Street from the West Heath. How keenly was she then looking forward to work in Africa! Yours was an ideal union: both of you such ardent and far-seeing missionaries, and each so fitted to the other, as by the very hand of God. The new sphere, too, seemed made for you both, and you for it. Well, she must be wanted for some heavenly ministry."

From Mrs. Jenkyn Brown, Birmingham: "It is little to say we all loved her—every one must—but we had the privilege of knowing her better than many, and I almost inherited love for her before we met, from my husband, who had known her longest."

From Mrs. Hooper, of Kibokolo: "To me Mrs. Lewis has ever been a dear elder sister, honoured and loved unspeakably. My sorrow is too deep for words."

CHAPTER XVIII

CHARACTERISTICS

MORE than once, since I began to write this book, it has been remarked to me by persons whose thoughts of Mrs. Lewis were altogether kindly, that she was an ordinary woman, and that the interest of her life is rather due to circumstance than to personality. Dissenting profoundly from this judgment, regarding her as one of the most extraordinary women I have ever met, I have wondered how such an opinion could have arisen. And I have to confess that if the lack of specific brilliant endowments makes a person ordinary, then perhaps there is excuse for speaking of Mrs. Lewis in such terms. Of genius, in the usual acceptation of the term, she had none. And no one was more perfectly aware of this than herself. She had no great learning. She was not a great speaker. Her speeches were quiet, earnest, matter-of-fact statements of the things which she had seen with her eyes, or which she most surely believed in her heart. She was not a brilliant writer. Her letters are interesting, and often fascinating, because she tells, with artless directness, stories of life and work which are remote

from common experience. And withal her personal bearing was quiet and unobtrusive to a degree.

Mrs. Lewis was an extraordinary woman, not by reason of unusual mental endowments, but rather by reason of distinguished moral and spiritual qualities, which achieved such co-ordination and control and consecration of modest gifts, as resulted in the building up of exalted character and the accomplishment of splendid work. Her life affords an illustration of the truth that common gifts, conscientiously used to the utmost limits of their content, become uncommon, and that whoso does his absolute best in a good cause avails himself of the mystic forces of a divinely ordered universe, unconsciously, if unconsciously, fulfilling Emerson's injunction: "Hitch your waggon to a star."

If Mrs. Lewis's gifts were common gifts, they were good gifts, and she had good store of them. No woman could have done what she did without a splendid physical constitution, managed and conserved with the wisdom of common sense. Her powers of endurance under exhausting and perilous conditions often elicited her wondering gratitude. In exigent circumstances, when the call of God came to her, she could take the biggest risks, brave woman that she was. But in normal conditions her devotion to her vegetable garden and her religious solicitude for all the details of domestic management which made for hygiene, proved how precious in her eyes was the matter of health, without which the work could not be done. The reader will remember that in

her discussion of the qualifications of a woman missionary, next after spiritual fitness she places a sound constitution. In her judgment an imperfect recognition of the fundamental importance of this matter was the simple and lamentable explanation of much sorrow and disappointment and loss.

Possibly not without subtle relation to her sound physical constitution was her notable force of will, which has been sufficiently illustrated in the foregoing pages. And I think it likely that the calmness which was one of her marked characteristics was due to her consciousness that when all was said she would do what seemed to her to be right, to the limit of her powers, irrespective of opposition, protest, or demur. Irritation, fuss, and fluster are the froth of weakness. She knew herself to be strong. She feared God and nothing else, and declined to waste her energy in superfluous perturbation.

In her native force of will is to be found the explanation of her extraordinary power of work. The amount of labour which she got through day by day in the debilitating climate of tropical Africa is amazing to many people of normal health, who perform their tasks in the comparatively bracing atmosphere of the homeland. What she willed to do she did. Fluctuations of mood were disregarded; petty distractions were disallowed. Enlightened and determined, she kept her course, as a liner forges on its way in spite of contrary winds, or buffeting seas, or enervating calms. Of course the volume and value of her work were immensely increased by her strict

observance of method. She worked by plan ; and here again it is force of will that tells. We are all of us methodical in ideal. The most casual of mortals has probably made schemes of work and time-tables enough to suffice for the good ordering of half a dozen lives. We resolve to make plans, exhaust our impulses in the seductive labours of construction, and fail in the detail of fulfilment. Mrs. Lewis made her plans and did what she planned to do. In an early chapter I have referred to her diary-keeping. Another illustration may be cited. Fifteen years before her death she determined to retain copies of her letters. The last letter she ever wrote, given in the previous chapter, was taken from her copy, and not from the original.

Her patience was as impressive as her strength of mind, and she had need of it all. The perversities and the backslidings of men and women and children for whose salvation she toiled and prayed tried her sorely, but she never gave up hope or the effort and the prayer which hope inspires. The children under training in her household were a care to her by day and night, which she sustained to the very end. After the session had closed at Kimpese, and when the illness was already upon her which resulted in her death, she wrote a long letter to Mrs. Bowskill, extending to several closely written quarto pages, discussing mission business. In the course of it she gave an account, not untouched with humour, of the impish tricks of one small girl of the household, whose genius for mischief engineered a series of midnight casualties and alarums suggestive of the inter-

ference of malignant spirits. Detected and foiled in other matters, the culprit one night startled the dormitory with outbursts of screaming, ostensibly occasioned by a recurrent dream that she was being badly beaten. Finally, Mrs. Lewis sent her husband to assure the innocent sufferer that next time the dream came *he* would fulfil it *with a stick*. There was no next time.

But the grand trial of her patience was the seven years' work at Kibokolo. By long labour, by kindness which could not be exhausted and would not be gainsaid, she won the respect and confidence of her wild, barbarous neighbours, and toward the end of her stay there were hopeful signs of coming harvest—the harvest of souls, for which her soul longed with passion derived from the very heart of God. She often spoke of the weariness and discouragement of those years of waiting. But her patience never failed. She held to her work, confident that if not in her day, yet surely in days that followed hers, the faithful sowing would be recompensed by Divine increase. It was even so. And the patience which waited for it was divine patience. I do not know whether she was acquainted with Dora Greenwell's "*Carmina Crucis*," but I can well imagine her finding comfort in one fine verse, so perfectly expressive of her own soul's attitude:

"And while my God is waiting I can wait."

There is little need to speak of her courage. I decline to call it masculine. There was nothing masculine about her. Her courage was sustained

by faith. She was engaged on God's business; she trusted Him to take care of His servant, and trusting found no cause for fear. One incident which I have failed to locate in the story may be cited in further illustration. In the course of a journey which she was making with her husband through unexplored country, her hammock-bearers and a number of carriers got ahead of Mr. Lewis, who had been detained. Suddenly their progress was barred by armed natives, who opened fire. The carriers dropped their loads and bolted, and her hammock-bearers besought permission to set her down. This she peremptorily refused, and by sheer power of will kept them to their duty. There was more firing, but putting large trust in God and some lesser confidence in the bad marksmanship of the natives with their flint-lock guns, she waited until Mr. Lewis came up and placated the enemy.

If Mrs. Lewis lacked the brilliant intellectual qualities which are notes of genius, she possessed in liberal measure what genius often wants, in disastrous destitution, viz., good sense—sense so good that it made her far-seeing, as Mr. Brock justly observes, and of sound judgment. Her papers which have passed through my hands prove abundantly how profoundly her practical wisdom was respected by her colleagues, who, as I have already stated, were accustomed to appeal to her for counsel in their many difficulties; and I know that I can claim the concurrence of Mr. Baynes and Mr. Wilson when I say that there was no woman on the field whose opinions concerning the conduct and the policy of the Mission

were received by the Committee with greater consideration.

She was an excellent judge of character, and though charitable toward all men, by no means confined herself to the use of honeyed words. She never found fault where there was none; but when she found it she described it in plain terms. In confidential letters to her friends occur passages of personal criticism which would make piquant reading if it were permissible to publish them. Conscientious and painstaking herself, she loathed slackness and slovenliness, especially when they appeared in what purported to be the service of God. Once, upon a great occasion, she heard a paltry speech from a minister of repute. Upon a lesser occasion he repeated large part of this speech, watered down to more insipid weakness, in her hearing and mine. I had known her a long time, but the withering terms of her criticism were something of a revelation.

Her habitual calmness of demeanour tended to suggest that she was unemotional; and this sometimes placed her at a temporary disadvantage in dealing with people who looked for demonstration. She was conscious of such disadvantage; and I recall a letter in which she congratulates a sister missionary upon the possession of a temperament which encouraged instant response. But "still waters run deep," and if Mrs. Lewis was a great woman, as I believe she was, it was in chief because "she loved much." She loved the dumb creatures about her, and was profoundly moved by the sight of their suffering. I once said to her husband, since her death, "Was her calmness

never broken up? Did she never explode?" And he replied, "I only remember three or four occasions upon which she was carried away by fierce anger, and in every instance it was cruelty to animals which provoked the explosion."

She loved the lowly creatures of God; but her greater love was given to those whom He has made in His own image, and for whom Christ died. Of her love for her husband and her kinsfolk and her elect friends, who answered her love in kind, little need be said. It was beautiful and worthy of her, but still within the common range of human experience and emotion. The love which marked her out and made her great was that holy charity which regards with divine compassion the ugly, the unthankful, and the evil. Squalid African babies, men and women foul with hideous vices and enthralled by bestial customs, were to her kind heart the dear objects of incessant solicitude. Enlightened by her great love, she understood the frightful strength of the forces which crushed them, yet steadfastly believed in the possibility of their deliverance. Surrounded by naked savages possessed by legions of devils, she saw as in a vision these same savages, clothed and in their right minds, sitting at the feet of Jesus, and the vision lured her on to persist, at any cost, in those ministries of love through which she hoped He might effect the transforming exorcism.

And this great love was begotten and sustained in her soul by faith in "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." She was an evangelical Christian. In early youth, as she journeyed, she came to a place

where there was a cross, and as she gazed at Him who hung there, the burden of sin rolled away, but the burden of love came upon her, and she never dropped the blessed load. "He loved me and gave Himself for me," was the dominant note of those "everlasting chimes" which made the cheer and inspiration of her sacrificial life. And the love which was "unto death" for her, was "unto death" for the whole world. And where in the whole world were men and women whose need of the knowledge of the love of God was more clamant and tragical than that of the Congo peoples? The fingers of the pierced hand beckoned her to Africa. To Africa she went; and for Africa she lived and died.

One personal word, and my task is done. Upon his return to England, alone, Mr. Lewis told me that during one whole day, as his wife lay dying, her minister's name was continually upon her lips; and, moreover, that she had expressed the desire that if anything were written about her it should be written by his hand. The kindly reader will understand that this affecting statement could not fail to impart a certain solemn tenderness to the temper in which I undertook my work. I would that the hand had been more cunning, and the heart and brain behind it worthier of the confidence and affection of my friend. But I have done my best. I have observed restraint. I have painted in quiet colours, as she herself would have desired. And if this simple memorial of Christian character and consecrated service carries on the thought of the reader to the Lord who inspired

them, and elicits sympathy for the cause to which they were so freely given, my recompense will be great, and I will render humble thanks to God, Who made her what she was, and permitted me to write her story.

APPENDIX

NOTE A.—P. 55.

THE GERMAN ANNEXATION

THE following passage taken from the Report of the Baptist Missionary Society, May, 1885, states the case succinctly :—

“ For many years past the Committee of the Society have indulged the hope that a favourable response would be returned by the British Government to the repeated appeals from the chiefs and head-men of the Cameroons district that their country might be taken under the government and protection of the English Crown, and when sending in memorials to successive Governments asking the same favour for the Society’s settlement of Victoria and the adjacent district belonging absolutely to the Mission, the Committee have frequently pleaded on behalf of the Dualla people also.

“ With regard to the Cameroons, however, all such expectations must be finally abandoned, as the district is now under German authority, the whole country having been annexed to the German Empire in August, 1884. The story of how this was brought about is so plainly told in a recent Blue Book presented in both Houses of Parlia-

ment, and entitled 'Africa, No. 1, 1885. Correspondence respecting affairs in the Cameroons,' that further reference to it here is unnecessary.

"The Committee, however, cannot refrain from placing on record their sincere regret that the British Government so long delayed taking action in response to the numerous appeals of the Cameroon chiefs and peoples, as but for this delay recent painful and disastrous events might altogether have been avoided, and the often expressed desires of the Duala peoples complied with.

"Nor is the recent annexation of the settlement of Victoria by the British Government likely to be attended with any real advantage to the dwellers there, if reported concessions of surrounding territory by the English Government to Germany be a fact; as by such arrangement the small township and territory belonging absolutely to the Mission will be completely environed by German possessions, and trade with the interior rendered practically valueless in consequence of restrictive and almost prohibitive duties and exactions.

"The outlook at present is dark in the extreme, and it appears more than probable that the work of the Society on the West Coast, rendered so dear to the denomination by the sacrifice of many noble lives and the outlay of large sums of money, may have to be relinquished.

"Should this eventually prove needful, the Committee earnestly hope that the work there may be carried on by some Evangelical German Missionary organisation, whose agents may have the joy of reaping a rich harvest from the toils, the tears, and the seed-sowing of devoted workers, many of whom have fallen asleep.

"Under present circumstances, however, and while negotiations are being carried on with Her Majesty's Government by the Committee, it would be premature

to forecast the future, or take any definite steps in the matter.

“The Committee are devoting to this painful business their constant and careful attention, and they earnestly invite friends of the Society to unite in special prayer on their behalf, that they may be Divinely guided to such issues as shall best promote the glory of God and the truest welfare of the peoples of the West Coast.”

The apprehensions of the Committee were realised, and in 1887 the stations on the Cameroons River and at Victoria were handed over to the Basle Mission.

NOTE B.—P. 110.

KONGO AND CONGO

The ancient kingdom, of which San Salvador was the capital, was the kingdom of *Kongo*. And the language of the Lower Congo region, of which Dr. Bentley wrote the grammar and dictionary, and into which he translated the New Testament, is the *Kongo* language. The San Salvador district is spoken of by the natives as *Kongo*. Hence when Mr. and Mrs. Lewis were departing for Kibokolo, they were said to be leaving *Kongo*. The distinction between Congo and Kongo is not always observed, but the reader will understand, when he meets the “K” spelling, that it is not used in error.

NOTE C.—P. 134.

“CONCERNING THE COLLECTION”

It may perhaps not be quite superfluous to inform the reader that the pig was duly paid for, and its price

placed in the treasury, before it was eaten at the Mission Christmas feast. Obviously all the other items of this strange collection must needs be in like fashion turned into money, for transmission to London. Otherwise Mr. Baynes and his staff would have been decidedly embarrassed by the receipt of a consignment of goods, including a very dead pig, a keg of gunpowder, and all the rest of it.

NOTE D.—P. 168.

THE OLD CATHEDRAL

The Portuguese discovered the Congo River in 1482, and in course of time San Salvador became the centre of a Christian civilisation of a kind. Several churches were built, and the Cathedral ruins referred to were the relics of the greatest of them. But the slave trade was of greater interest to the Portuguese than the business of evangelisation, and ecclesiastics engaged in it. When our missionaries reached San Salvador, only the faintest traces of earlier missions remained. For many generations barbarism had resumed its ancient sway.

NOTE E.—P. 194.

“THE FIRST WHITE MEN”

When Lieutenant Grandy reached San Salvador in 1873, the King was ill with small-pox. The traveller treated him, left directions for further treatment, and foretold the progress of the case. Upon his return from Tungwa, he found the King full of wonder at the traveller's knowledge and gratitude for his own recovery.

By way of proving his gratitude he was asked to treat kindly the next white men who came along. He promised; and our missionaries reckoned themselves, in part, indebted for their good reception to the King's fidelity to his promise.

NOTE F.—P. 310.

“ BELLA ”

“ Bella ” is 27 inches high, with fair hair and eyes that open and shut. She was sent out to Kibokolo by the children of Belle Isle Church Sunday School, for Christmas, 1903. In due course she migrated to Kimpese, and though her complexion had suffered in the Congo climate, as is usual with English children, her first appearance made a great sensation, and the fading of her beauty was overlooked by her admirers. It was originally intended that she should be the “ child ” of a certain black girl whom the Belle Isle scholars supported. But Mrs. Lewis determined that she should be the “ child ” of the Mission; and to this decision, with its consequent restrictions, “ Bella ” doubtless owes her soundness of limb and her comparatively long career.

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